

CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN

By Bertram D. Wolfe

With an introduction by
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Introduction

TAKEN as a whole, the Spanish revolution of recent years undoubtedly marks a high point in the social development of post-war Europe. In Spain, for the first time since the days of soviets in Germany and Hungary, the power of the worker and peasant masses proved great enough to overthrow the rotting structure of the old regime and even to challenge the as yet unstabilized power of "democratic" capitalism.

For the first time in many years, the slogan of proletarian revolution has appeared on the order of the day in a West European country. Whatever the outcome may be in Spain, at least this imperishable glory cannot be stolen from the Spanish proletariat—that it has dared to lift to the skies the same red banner that was borne to victory by the Russian Bolsheviks in November 1917!

Today, the Spanish revolution is being stifled by the "democratic" reaction at home and abroad, clearing the way for Franco, Mussolini and Hitler. The underlying social aims of the fascist insurrection—the preservation of capitalism and the strangulation of the labor movement—are now being actively promoted by the imperialist diplomacy of the "great democracies," England and France, and the counter-revolutionary terror of the "democratic" coalition of Stalinists, right-wing Prieto socialists and conservative Republican politicians. In the interests of this reactionary crusade, everything is being sacrificed, even the chances of victory at the front in the war against Franco.

But that is only one side of the picture. The other side shows us the great masses of the Spanish workers and peasants beginning to awaken to the extreme peril of their situation; it shows us an increasingly revolutionary mood among the millions of members of the C.N.T. and

the U.G.T., the two great labor federations; it shows us the significant advances being made, in the face of ruthless persecution, by the P.O.U.M., the heroic revolutionary Marxist party in Spain. It shows us the Spanish masses rising still unconquered under the blows of fascist and "democratic" reaction alike.

This is the story that Bertram D. Wolfe tells in such brilliant fashion in the pages that follow. These chapters were written intermittently over a period of seven months as articles for the *Workers Age*. Yet so keen is the insight exhibited in them and so realistic the approach, that the work is of far more than current interest; it is really a fundamental contribution to the understanding of the Spanish revolution and its many complex problems. It is living Marxism at its best.

Of such a work, Bertram D. Wolfe is peculiarly fitted to be the author. His wide studies in economics, history and social theory, his two decades of direct experience in the revolutionary labor movement at home and abroad, are supplemented by an extensive knowledge of Spanish history and political development and a sympathetic appreciation of Spanish culture and tradition.

The last thesis of the martyred P.O.U.M. leader, Andres Nin, which forms a supplement to this work, needs no recommendation. It has already become a classic of revolutionary theory and policy.

WILL HERBERG

December 22, 1937.

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	by Andres Nin	

Political Thesis prepared for the convention of the P.O.U.M., shortly before its suppression and the murder of Nin.

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CHAPTER I

THE REVOLUTION OF 1931.

ALMOST anything may happen in Spain. With the "great democracies," England, France, the United States, treacherously choking off her sources of supplies and intriguing for a "truce," with the Soviet Union backing her materially but using the authority thus acquired in ways that hinder the waging of a successful revolutionary war, with Italy and Germany openly invading her soil and joining England and France in "preventing foreign intervention,"—almost anything may happen in Spain.

Out of the Spanish civil war may come a temporary victory of fascism and a military dictatorship, though two months in Spain have convinced me that the fascists can never permanently hold the land. There may come a truce in which foreign and domestic rifles rule with or without a torn and treason-soiled "democratic" flag flying from their bayonet points. But that cannot be permanent either, for it is impossible to keep a permanent army of occupation in Spain of sufficient size to maintain such a regime indefinitely. There may come a partition of Spain into German, Italian, French and English spheres of influence, to be followed inevitably by a fresh flare-up of revolutionary war of independence, unification and socialism. Or there may be a victory of the prole-

tarian revolution in Spain insuring the triumphant waging of a revolutionary war against military dictatorship and foreign invasion and the retaking of the entire Iberian peninsula. In short, almost anything may happen in Spain—anything, that is, except the establishment of a bourgeois, democratic, parliamentary republic. That alone is excluded by the very nature of the social forces, internal and international, clashing in the Spanish civil war.

PREREQUISITES FOR A PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC

Parliamentary republics cannot be pulled like rabbits out of a hat nor conjured onto the stage of history by the incantations of a Comintern thesis. They require a powerful progressive and revolutionary bourgeoisie, strong enough to dominate all other classes, Jacobin enough to exterminate feudalism by its roots, revolutionary enough to employ dictatorship and terror against reaction; they require a bourgeoisie confident of the grandeur of its own destiny, strong in prestige among other classes, unafraid of its proletariat so that it cannot think of surrendering to reaction. Nascent parliamentary republics require a proletariat so weak and immature that it does not even conceive of itself as a separate class nor dream of ruling in its own name, a proletariat whose revolutionary horizon does not extend beyond the vision of forcing the bourgeoisie to follow to the end its revolutionary role.

Such a situation has in general not existed in Europe since 1848. The "great future" of the

bourgeoisie today lies wholly in the past. No abracadabra of "People's Front" spells can possibly redissolve the proletariat into the vague conglomerate of the undifferentiated "people," the third estate. The bourgeoisie has long ago become more afraid of its mighty offspring than of its aging and tyrannical parent. On a world scale, it has long ago become a reactionary class, proceeding now with concealment, corruption and democracy, and now with naked force, to destroy the progressive institutions which in the days of its vigorous youth it conceived and created.

Today, as backward Russia proved in 1905 and 1917, as advanced Germany proved in 1918, as Spain is proving to those who are not wilfully blind or under instructions not to see, a new bourgeoisie can consolidate its rule only by vile partnership with feudal reaction or by naked fascist force, and only after it has crushed its proletariat in fire and blood. And today, as Lenin so conclusively demonstrated, only the proletariat in power and supported by the peasantry can root out feudalism in any land where it still exists, and only by transforming in its own image the "bourgeois democratic" revolution into the proletarian revolution.

No spell nor incantation can make the mighty ghosts of the past tread again the boards of history. Paderewski and Pilsudski, Noske and Hindenburg, Azaña and Negrin, are no Robespierres and Marats. Invocations of 1776 and 1789 will not alter the social content of 1937. The social revolution of the twentieth century cannot draw

its poetry from the past; it can draw that poetry only from the future. The hope of mankind in an hour of great desperation lies in the kindling of the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat, not in the dimming of the stage lights and the trotting out of the phosphorescent bones of the moldering ghost of bourgeois revolution whose little hour upon the stage has passed forever.

LAYING THE SPECTER OF REVOLUTION

The Spanish capitalist class is feeble, rachitic, cowardly and treacherous. It is the weakest social class in Spain. It has shown sporadic strength only against the proletariat, and then only when backed by a military apparatus it itself was powerless to create and impotent to destroy. For years it gave little shadow pushes against the tottering throne of Alfonso, but hastened to give substantial support whenever the throne's teetering seemed too violent. At last the "Republican Revolution" of April 14, 1931 took it completely by surprise.

"The fourteenth in the morning," wrote one of its leaders, "when we saw that the people had taken the streets, there was no way out (no tuvimos mas remedio) but to go to the City Hall and Parliament Building and raise the Republican banner."

Such is the Spanish bourgeoisie's 1789! Marx's formula, "Once in tragedy, the second time in farce," is too strong for such a situation: even farce requires an energy beyond their feeble powers.

Faced with the flight of the monarch and the embarrassing parenthood of an unwished-for infant republic, the one desire of these twentieth century "Jacobins" was to stop the revolution before it had really gotten started. They protected the flight of the king. They protected the landowners against the peasants and themselves against the proletariat. They left the monarchist bureaucratic apparatus undisturbed: They stopped the fleeing feudal-monarchical generals whose hands were red with the blood of so many repressions, but not to put them on trial for their crimes. Instead, they restored them to their places as masters of the apparatus of force which is the real determinant of the class nature of political power. To the masses whose Gulliver-like stirrings in their sleep had snapped the packthreads of monarchy and terrified these pigmy politicians, they proclaimed, before the real revolution had even begun: "The revolution is over: as you were!"

BUILDING THE NEW ORDER

Even the symbols of monarchy remained intact. For months I continued to receive my mail from Spain bearing postage stamps still adorned with the ugly physiognomy of Alfonso XIII across which had been stamped the words "Republica Española." After all, they had been printed and had to be used up: this petty bourgeois revolution was nothing if not economical. At last, the day came when the supply of Alphonsine faces was exhausted and my mail arrived bearing a new

stamp. I scanned it anxiously with the aid of a magnifying glass. In discreet and tiny letters it bore the revolutionary motto: "Fomentar el arbol" (Plant a tree)!

The bourgeoisie was in a cold sweat at the specter of revolution. Its panic took a parliamentary and constitutional form. The initiative must at all costs be taken out of the street and the field and into the legislative hall. The masses must be lulled into slumber once more by the twilight twitterings of this strange birdcage of parliamentary "people's representatives." At the same time, Sanjurjo and Goded, Franco and Mola and Quiapo de Llano were dragged still trembling out of the limbo of history by the new Republican War Minister Manuel Azaña, and restored to their places of power. If oratory would not suffice to lull the masses back to sleep, then the guns would have their say. The oratory provided the trimmings, the guns provided the reality of the young parliamentary republic.

"To make a written constitution," wrote Lassalle, "is the easiest thing in the world; it can be done in three days. It is the last thing that should be done. If it is produced prematurely before the Revolution has changed the foundations of the old order, it is false."

The new republican constitution was produced in Spain immediately. It was patched up out of the dying Weimar Constitution and the Mexican Constitution that had never come to life. To these elements were added lyrical trimmings that only

Spanish intellectuals turned statesmen were capable of providing.

"One night," writes Maurin, "Alcala Zamora believed he could leave the Chamber for a moment, leaving Socialists and Republicans to themselves. But just then, Araquistain, Socialist deputy, driven by the devil of mischief, got the idea of proposing an amendment to Article I of the Constitution, to make it read that 'Spain is a Workers' Republic.' The Chamber was almost deserted. The previous question was called and the motion got a majority.

"Next morning, when Alcala Zamora learned what had happened, he rebuked the bad boys of the preceding evening and, with general approval, sent Article I to the repair shop."

It came out reading:

"Spain is a Republic of the Workers of All Classes!"

But before the constitution was completed and in operation, a clause was added providing for its own suspension. It was the only clause in the Constitution that was ever carried out in life. It was applied not against the monarchist generals, but with the aid of the monarchist generals against the proletariat and peasantry who had made the revolution. It is a measure of the "republicanism" of the Spanish bourgeoisie and their republican politicians, and of the depth of the bourgeois republican revolution.

CHAPTER II

HOW AZANA PREPARED THE REBELLION

MANUEL AZANA is today the People's Front President of Spain. During the first days of the Spanish Republic he was its War Minister: in fact he assumed that post on the very day of the Republic's birth, April 14, 1931. His conduct in that key post teaches the Spanish masses what they can expect from the Republican leaders of the People's Front.

In periods of sharp class struggle and social revolution, the armed forces become openly the key to political power. They are the ultimate basis on which rests the rule of any dominant class; hence every revolution in history has found its ultimate decision in the reorganizing of the armed forces: in the disarming of the reactionary class and the arming of the revolutionaries. Cromwell's Ironsides, France's National Guard, Ireland's Republican Army, America's Minute Men and Continental Army, Russia's Red Guard and Red Army, are all evidences of this truism.

But the Spanish Republican bourgeoisie is far more afraid of the proletariat than it is of the landowners. More than it fears feudalism, clericalism and monarchism, it fears socialism; more than the armed reaction, the armed masses. It is a coward class afraid of its own destiny. Therefore

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it dared not overthrow Primo de Rivera, dared not overthrow Alfonso. When at last the masses took things into their own hands, drove out dictator and monarch, and handed the power to the trembling "Republicans," the latter, with Azaña at their head, made no move to disarm the feudal-monarchist military apparatus. Rather did they seek to "restore discipline," keep the military machine intact, render it more "efficient."

THE SPANISH ARMY

The war machine that Azaña took over was one of the worst and most reactionary in Europe. It had three times as many officers as the mighty French military mechanism! They had been recruited by the monarchy from the sons of the feudal landowning families. They were monarchists to their manicured finger tips. They had secured advancement by court intrigue and military coups and replenished their purses by notorious graft and corruption. The army had been for decades a magnificent tax-eating machine, utterly incompetent for national defense or imperialist aggression, with a long and inglorious record of defeats in Cuba, the Philippines and Morocco. It was skilled only in military *pronunciamientos* (the very word has passed into international speech) and in fire at close range upon Spanish peasants and workers. In this it was supplemented by the hated Civil Guard with a record of half a century of petty and brutal tyranny, and the frontier and treasury guards known as the *carabineros*. Azaña increased the army from 105,000

men to 130,000, the Civil Guard and police force from 32,000 to 64,000; and the *carabineros* have recently been increased under Negrin (as head of the Treasury) from 4,000 to 40,000. To these, the Republic added an entirely new military formation, the Assault Guards, who were supposed to be pledged to loyalty to the Republic. Naturally, nothing was said about loyalty to the workers and peasants.

AZANA'S MILITARY REFORMS

The republican War Minister did try to reduce the excessive number of officers. Naturally, he did not propose to use "revolutionary" means like the dismissal of monarchist generals and the appointment of republicans, nor the court-martial of those whose hands were stained with the blood of Spanish workers and peasants and republican revolutionaries. That would be too much like "confiscation without compensation," and these bourgeois republicans had a deep-going sympathy with the protection of all vested interests against "lawless expropriation." To induce a few generals to resign, Azaña offered them retirement with full pay, free passage on the railroads, preference in government and professional employment. Only a few officers took advantage of the offer, and they were the best of them, men who hated the corrupt atmosphere of army life or whose lives were made miserable by their reactionary fellow officers because they dared to sympathize with the Republic! But the hard-boiled reactionaries, the adepts of con-

spiracy and pronunciamiento, the realists who recognized that the army was the key to political power and to the maintenance of the privileges of their class, remained at their posts and began to plot for military dictatorship, monarchist restoration and counter-revolution.

THE CASE OF GENERAL MOLA

General Emilio Mola had been one of the most hated of the monarchist generals. When Primo de Rivera fell and the throne itself was shaking, military-dictator Berenguer had appointed him as Director of Public Safety in Madrid, rightly judging him to be a ruthless defender of the status quo against the aroused people. His bloody rule made him more hated even than Alfonso and when the King fled, the people went up and down the streets of Madrid shouting: "Abajo Mola" (Down with Mola)! He himself thought that his days were numbered. "I left police headquarters," he writes in his memoirs, "by a service stairway, alone, as a private citizen, and grabbing the first taxi that I found on the street, I went to hide myself in the house of a friend." But Azaña took him, trembling, out of his hiding place and restored the "butcher of the Battle of San Carlos" (where a few days earlier his troops had fired on and killed a number of demonstrating students) to his post as a general in the army. Recognizing this as *carte blanche* to continue his political activities, he immediately began to conspire with his fellow generals against the Republic. When Gil Robles became War Minister

in 1934, General Mola was sent to Morocco where he completed his plans for the mutiny of the Foreign Legion. When Azaña became President in February 1936, he was removed from Morocco and sent to that center of feudal reaction, Navarre, where in the garrison fortress of Pamplona, he openly received emissaries from other parts of the army and completed his conspiracy.

The cases of General Franco, of General Sanjurjo, of General Goded, of General Queipo de Llano, are dishearteningly similar. The last named married the daughter of the first President of the Republic, Alcalá Zamora, and actually became Chief of the Presidential Military Staff! General Sanjurjo, Alfonso's head of the hated Civil Guard, was continued in his post as "protector of the Republic" until, on August 10, 1932, he led an uprising for the restoration of the monarchy. His uprising failed thanks to a prompt and united general strike of the anarchists, socialists and communists and unaffiliated workers of Seville, where the coup was attempted. Condemned to death, Sanjurjo was soon pardoned and released and died in a plane accident in July 1936 returning from Germany, after a conference with Hitler, to take charge of the military rebellion.

THE STRANGE CASE OF COLONEL MANGADA

Illustrated on page 29 is the facsimile of an amazing document. It is entitled, "Fascism in the Army or the Union of Spanish Military Men." Its author is Colonel Julio Mangada, retired; its date

El fascio en el Ejército o la Unión de Militares Españoles (U. M. E.)



JULIO MANGADA ROSENÖRN

Precio 40 cts.

of issue March 28, 1936, that is, *before* the uprising of July of last year; and I purchased it at an ordinary bookstore in Madrid.

The pamphlet tells how Colonel Mangada was court-martialled, jailed, driven out of the army, for the sole crime of loyalty to the Republic. It reveals that the military conspiracy which brought about the rebellion of July 1936 had been going on since April 1931, throughout the existence of the Republic. It shows Mangada repeatedly warning his superiors, War Minister Azaña and the latter's successors, Martinez Barrio and Hidalgo, of the plot against the Republic. It gives details of the conspiracy, names, dates, plans, documents, and extracts of his repeated reports to the government. It gives proof that Azaña's assistant, the Sub-Secretary of War, was a monarchist conspirator, that officers who were friendly to the Republic were forced to resign or be court-martialled. Mangada himself was tried and imprisoned in 1931; released after the Sanjurjo revolt (which his warnings, had they been heeded, might have forestalled); then jailed again and finally forced to resign from the army. It proves that President Azaña knew exact details of the impending rebellion when on March 18, 1936, on a secret ultimatum from the fascist general staff, Azaña's War Minister issued the following communication:

"It has come to the knowledge of the Minister of War that certain rumors are insistently circulating concerning the state of mind of the officers and sub-officials of the army.

"These rumors which can immediately be qual-

ified as false and without foundation, tend without doubt to maintain public disquiet, sow animosities against the military men and undermine, if not destroy, discipline, the fundamental basis of the army.

"The Minister of War has the honor of making public the fact that all the officers' staff and petty officers of the Spanish Army, from the highest posts to the most modest, maintains itself within the limits of the most strict discipline, disposed at any moment to an exact fulfillment of its duties—and needless to say—obedience to the order of the legally constituted Government.

"What is true, and the Minister of War wants to certify to it, is that the Government of the Republic has learned, with sorrow and indignation, of the unjust attacks to which the officers of the Army have been subjected.

"The Spanish military men, models of self-denial and loyalty, merit from all their fellow-citizens the respect, the affection and the gratitude which is due to those who have made, in the service and defense of the Fatherland and of the Republic, the sacrifice of their own lives, if national safety or national honor requires it.

"Remote from all political struggle, faithful servitors of the constituted power and guarantee of obedience to the popular will, all the component part of the armed forces of the nation ought to be considered by their fellow citizens as the strongest support of the Republican State, and only a criminal and tortuous desire to undermine it can explain the insults and the verbal and written at-

tacks which have been directed against it.

"The Government of the Republic applies and will apply the law against any one who persists in such an unpatriotic attitude. . . ."

At that moment, Azaña and his War Minister had in their possession an ultimatum from the fascist Union of Spanish Military Men demanding that they make such a statement, a copy of a subversive appeal of the same group to the Civil and Assault Guards to support the army in its coming uprising, and a statement of the same Military Union proposing to crush the People's Front government "with bullets" and to wipe out the following organizations and their principal leaders: The Republican Union, the Republican Left, the Catalan Esquerra, the Socialist Party and U.G.T., the Syndicalist Party, the Libertarian Socialist Federation, the P.O.U.M., the C.G.T.U., the C. N.T. and the F.A.I. The following names were specifically mentioned: Martínez Barrio, Azaña, Companys, Largo Caballero, Andrés Nin, Galán. The Communist Party (no doubt through an oversight, though one can imagine the vile factional misuse that would have been made if the name of the P.O.U.M. had been omitted!) is not included in the list, nor are any of its leaders.

"Engrave these names well in your memory," reads the fascist military manifesto. "Neither under legal mask nor illegally, will the way be smoothed for what they intend. The bases of the People's Front can only be imposed on Spain in the streets. With bullets! Before the army consents to the triumph of communism, it will crush the

revolution forever. The revolutionary leaders will not again save themselves under the mantle of impunity with which they are covered by the fear of politicians and rulers. They will not escape from our hands without paying for their tremendous crimes!"

When the War Department endorsed the officers who had issued that circular, Colonel Mangada's patience was exhausted, and on March 28, he issued to the people his report in the form of the pamphlet from which I have been quoting.

CHAPTER III

"STORMING THE HEAVENS"

THE republican government received confidential notice on July 16, 1936 that the long projected military uprising was to be launched in Morocco the next morning. Its only response was the perpetration of a ghastly pun!¹ On the seventeenth at dawn, in accordance with a prearranged schedule, the officers of the Foreign Legion declared themselves in rebellion and called upon the other garrisons to second their movement. One after another, the officers' corps of other detachments followed suit. Yet, even now, the People's Front government, which had so long known what was going on, made no move to stop the revolt!

For three days, the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth of July, it refused to dissolve the army, refused to free the soldiers from their duty of obeying their officers, refused to call upon them to arrest the revolting generals. The workers, with-

¹ "A group of persons went to the Congress and in one of its corridors stopped the President of the Cabinet, Casares Quiroga, and in confidence communicated the fact that the military pronouncement was imminent. He listened unconcerned, replying: 'So you assure me that the military are going to rise. All right, gentlemen, let them rise. As for me, I am going to bed.'—from a newspaper account of the events of the day preceding the uprising. The words "rise" (*levantarse*) and "go to bed" (*acostarse*) are opposites in Spanish, whence the "point" of the pun.

out waiting for orders, declared a general strike, offered their services to crush the rebellion, and, as they had so often done before during the anxious months of governmental inaction, demanded arms. But the republican politicians, less afraid of a military dictatorship than of the masses in arms, refused to open the arsenals.

The government made frantic efforts to come to some sort of compromise with the rebellion, to recognize the power of the military dictatorship while retaining the externals of republican forms, in short, to surrender "with dignity." To tempt the reaction to accept a compromise, they set up several "transition" governments in quick succession, each more to the right than its predecessor. Casares Quiroga yielded the prime ministership to Martínez Barrio; Martínez Barrio to José Giral.² Politicians who had openly opposed the People's Front from the right were included in the successive cabinets and the representatives of the masses in the trade unions and working class parties were excluded. But the generals, flushed with the first taste of victory, were contemptuous of these manoeuvres and refused to accept their "surrender with dignity." They had no further use for these miserable puppets who had served their purpose as far as mouse-hearted inaction could serve. Did the rebellion not have the entire army behind it? What was the need of further pretense and compromise? They would accept nothing less than flight or res-

² It is an ominous sign that José Giral has again appeared in the government recently formed under the premiership of Negrín.

ignation of the republican politicians and the establishment of an undisguised military dictatorship. All was over but the division of the spoils. Then the unexpected, the incredible happened!

THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION BEGINS

(On July 19, the workers of Barcelona, virtually unarmed, attacked the Barcelona barracks. They had a few pistols, concealed in their homes from the attempts of the republican officials to disarm them; a few sticks of dynamite taken from construction jobs; a few hunting rifles taken from sporting goods stores; some trucks and cars that they had commandeered on the streets. They had paving stones for barricades and the stout hearts of men accustomed to face the troops under monarchy and republic and they were determined not to permit the establishment of a fascist military dictatorship. Under the leadership of the C.N.T.,³ the F.A.I.,⁴ and the P.O.U.M.,⁵ they advanced

3 C.N.T. (Confederación Nacional de Trabajo), one of the two great trade union centers of the country, syndicalist in its official philosophy and predominantly under the leadership of syndicalists and anarchists. The other great trade union center, the U.G.T. (Unión General de Trabajadores) is socialist in official philosophy and predominantly under the leadership of members of the Socialist Party. Its outstanding leaders is Largo Caballero.

4 F.A.I. (Federación Anarquista Ibérica) is an anarchist propaganda organization which, despite its official apoliticism, actually functions as a political party in the sense of seeking to guide the workers as a class in their struggles against the power of the ruling class and for

against the heavily armed garrison. As they advanced, they did what the government should have done, called upon the soldiers to come over to their side, to disobey and arrest their officers. They were greeted by rifle shots, cannon fire and a withering hail of machine gun bullets. Ascaso fell. Other heroes fell. But from behind men rushed forward to seize the rifles and pistols of the fallen. The advance continued. Soldiers within the barracks were shaken in their blind loyalty to their officers; the hail of bullets began going deliberately wide of the advancing "target"; soldiers were disobeying their officers; some were raising white handkerchiefs, others were trying to arrest those who were giving the orders. In a great rush, the crowd surged forward and took the fortress! The government had refused to arm the workers: now they armed themselves from the arsenals of the Ataranzas Barracks.

the proletarian revolution. It exercises great influence in the C.N.T.

5 P.O.U.M. (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista) is a communist party, which, unlike the official Communist Party of Spain, remains true to the principles of communism. The bulk of its membership comes from the Workers and Peasants Block under the leadership of Joaquín Maurín which broke with the Communist International when the latter adopted sectarian tactics. They were joined about two years ago by the much smaller Communist Left under the leadership of Andrés Nin, which broke with Trotsky when they refused to accept the latter's order to enter the Socialist (Second) International. The two groups fused to form the P.O.U.M., whence its name which means "Workers Party of Marxist Unification."

This epic deed of the Barcelona workers saved Spain and changed the course of the history of our times. Immediately all cowardice, compromise and indecision were at an end: the military had found a force capable of opposing it. The next day, July 20, stirred by the heroism of the Barcelona proletariat, the workers of Madrid attacked the Montaña Barracks on the edge of West Park. Backed this time by a section of the Assault Guards, they took the barracks by storm, and Madrid joined Barcelona. At the same time, proletarian revolution broke out all over Catalonia. Everywhere, C.N.T., F.A.I., U.G.T. and P.O.U.M. workers united to oppose the might of the proletariat to the might of the militarists. Within a week, all Catalonia, Valencia and Castille were in the hands of the workers and they were pressing forward towards the retaking of the rest of Spain. Everywhere, committees sprang up, somewhat analogous to the soviets in Russia in 1917, spontaneous organs of struggle and administration such as the proletariat sets up after its large democratic fashion as great weapons of the masses whenever they go into motion on their own behalf. The government had refused to arm the proletariat; it armed itself. The government had failed to dissolve the army; the workers, aided by their brothers in the barracks, dissolved the army, arrested and executed its fascist officers, disarmed the forces of reaction. Militia committees armed the masses and began to drill them; factory committees took over the workshops and began to operate them; food committees attended to provisions and sup-

plies; transport committees commandeered trucks and automobiles and trolleys and trains; peasant committees began seizing the great estates; committees took over the administration of towns and villages; patrol committees ferreted out fascists, examined suspicious travellers, suppressed conspiracies, executed revolutionary justice. Alongside the republican government that had failed the people in their hour of need, another government, a workers and peasants government, began to appear in embryonic form. To it the masses turned for guidance, for leadership, for orders. It was flesh of their flesh and bone of their bone: it enjoyed their confidence for it was the democratic and energetic expression of their own will.

THE DUAL POWER

But at Madrid the other government remained still strangely inactive. It no longer refused arms to the workers, for they had taken them and armed themselves. It no longer tried to compromise with fascism, for the heroism of the Barcelona anarcho-syndicalists and P.O.U.M.ists had made surrender and compromise impossible. Casares Quiroga, the Prime Minister who had sought to meet a military uprising by going to bed, disappeared. Manuel Azaña, the President and ex-War Minister who had kept these monarchist generals at their posts for five years until they had completed their plans for revolt, fled to a monastery. The deputies who had filled the Chamber with their lyrical bird cries became silent and for the most part went into

hiding or sought safety in Paris. New and more "left" cabinets were formed but without the intervention of parliament. Having failed to give the masses leadership, they were now forced to appeal to representatives of the masses to enter the "republican" government, lest the masses consolidate a government of their own, a government of the committees, a government of the workers and peasants. The republican politicians, those who were not too cowardly to remain, offered to head the government, in order to head off the developing proletarian revolution.

Where the workers, for the moment, found their own head, they advanced with giant strides. Having reconquered Catalonia, they advanced far into rural Aragon. Having taken Madrid and Valencia, they reoccupied Castille and Valencia province. But the demoralized shadow government at Madrid continued to set the mark of vacillation, incompetence and the fear of the colossal forces it had to deal with, upon everything it did.

If we are to believe Leon Blum, and his public declaration on the question has never been denied, the Madrid government secretly assented to the shameful farce of "non-intervention" when he proposed it to them.

It possessed a 2,400,000,000 peseta gold reserve, one of the largest in the world outside of a handful of great powers; yet it made no serious attempt to purchase arms on a large scale for months, until it was too late. Nor did it remove, even now, the old monarchist officers where the prompt action of the working class had prevented them from de-

claring for the rebellion and had obliged them to assert that they had never wavered in their "loyalty" to the republic. In the months to come, all defeats were to be due to those two causes: lack of arms and treachery by unreliable officers!

Spain was being led by two governments: one, the cabinet of bourgeois republican politicians that had proved and continued to prove its incompetence and unreliability, a government that derived its authority from inertia and habit and from the theoretical support of a parliament that had ceased to function and had disappeared; the other, a half-formed government of committees, leading the masses, yet only partially conscious of its authority and role. Upon the resolution of the issue of authority between these dual and distinct organs of power—cabinet nominally parliamentary or committees that were the germs of soviets—depended the future of Spain.

CHAPTER IV

WAR AND REVOLUTION

IN critical times the art of using language to conceal thought becomes to the ruling class and its political agents the most important of all the arts. Convention, habit and routine have lost their accustomed power: the masses shake off their age-old lethargy, lift their eyes in hope towards the citadels of power, seize barracks and overthrow bastilles almost literally with naked hands, question men and institutions that have no warrant but their age and oppressive weight, develop amazing initiative and begin to move on their own behalf. Then old political leaders hastily undergo a change of costume, ever easier than a change of heart, and appear bedecked in phrygian caps and red ribbons. Radical phraseology begins to sprout like a red rash all over the ancient and infirm body politic. The masses, so newly entered on the stage of politics, are confused; men and events are seen through rose-colored glasses till bitter experience teaches them to distinguish between the appearance and the reality, the phrase and the substance, the mask and the visage that hides behind it.

During such periods of honeymoon confusion, everybody is a "revolutionary" and no one is so foolhardy as to come out openly against "the revolution." The energy of the masqueraders is cautiously bent to the task of keeping it as much

phrase and as little substance as possible, of slowing it up, preventing the application of its most urgently needed measures, and sabotaging it in its own name. "For the sake of the revolution," the revolution itself must be postponed till "better," i.e. less revolutionary, times.

"FIRST WIN THE WAR . . ."

One of the most ingenious of these formulae is the slogan being advanced to sabotage the revolution in Spain: "First win the war, then make the revolution." It is also one of the most dangerous, for all history teaches that truly democratic and popular wars can only be waged and won by revolutionary means. Indeed, Spain has already shown, as France in 1789, Russia in 1917, and Ethiopia by negative demonstration in 1935, that wars for freedom are lost if the revolution flags and can be won against the most fearful odds of internal opposition and foreign invasion of a coalesced reactionary world, if revolution frees the amazing energies latent in the masses of the population when they have taken their destinies in their own hands. Those energies far outweigh and demoralize the fighting force of superior armies sent against them (superior in arms and numbers and wealth and training, indeed in all save morale) for all armies are made up of workers and peasants and the revolution has an expansive power that is as incalculable as it is irresistible when it is freely developing according to its inner necessities and the laws of its own being.

Rosa Luxemburg has formulated the law of the relation between war and revolution in classic form in the following words:

"Class struggle and resistance to invasion are not opposed to each other, as the official legend would have us believe, but the former is the means and the expression of the latter. . . . The fearless prosecution of the class struggle has always proven the most effective weapon against foreign invasion. . . . The classic example of our own times is the Great French Revolution. In 1793, Paris, the heart of France, was surrounded by enemies. And yet Paris and France did not succumb to the European coalition. If, at that critical time, France was able to meet each new coalition of the enemy with a new and miraculous . . . burst of fighting spirit . . . it was only because of the impetuous release of the inmost forces of society in class struggle. Today, in the perspective of a century, it is plain that only this intensification of the class struggle, that only the dictatorship of the French people and their fearless radicalism could raise means and forces from out of the very soil of France sufficient to defend and support a newborn society against a world of enemies, against the intrigues of a dynasty, against the treasonable machinations of the aristocrats, against the scheming of the clergy, against the treachery of the generals, against the hostility of sixty departments and provincial capitals, against the united armies and navies of monarchial Europe. The centuries have proven . . . that relentless class struggle is the power that awakens the spirit of

self-sacrifice, the moral strength of the masses—that the class struggle is the best protection and the best defense against the foreign enemy."

THE TRANSFER OF ARMED POWER

On July 17, 1936 the bourgeois republic, the Azaña "People's Front" government, proved incapable of proceeding against the armed rebellion just as it had been incapable of preventing it and incapable of disarming the feudal monarchy during five years of republican rule. The same social fact, that it feared the armed masses even more than the armed reaction, paralyzed it now as it had paralyzed it in the past. The war against fascism could not even *begin* until the masses began the revolution. On July 19, when the workers took matters into their own hands, disregarded the cowardly and treacherous government which was trying to negotiate surrender, violated the government's decision not to arm them and established their own armed forces, they thereby began the war and the revolution in one. No amount of inconsistency in carrying through the revolution to all its conclusions and no amount of weakness in the conduct of certain phases of the war can obscure this fact. Indeed, the two go together in this also, for the conduct of the war has suffered in direct proportion with the weakness and inconsistencies of the proletariat in the carrying through of the revolution. But from this fact alone one thing at least is clear: *if there had been no revolution, there would have been no war.*

In the great cities, above all in Barcelona, the victorious workers, arms in hand and faced with the need of provisioning and equipping their armed forces, immediately proceeded to the seizure of the factories, the existent stocks of materials and foodstuffs, and the means of transportation. Thanks to that, they were able for a brief period to assume the offensive and advance far into Aragon and much of the rest of Spain. It is noteworthy that, once the workers lost the initiative to the government in place of constituting themselves as the government, loyalist Spain was never again, up to this writing, able to assume the offensive.

The President and Cabinet, powerless to prevent the seizure of the factories by the workers, did its best to limit and restrain. Its decrees are aimed at restricting seizures to factories whose owners have openly declared for the rebellion. But since the workers took the main industrial towns by storm within a few days of the outbreak of the rebellion (Barcelona in two days, Madrid in three, Valencia in less than a week), the majority of the owners of industry had neither time nor inclination to declare themselves fascists. Among these "loyal" factory owners, and the "loyal" landowners similarly circumstanced, and in the political organizations which they support and which defend them, is the real haven of the much talked of "Fifth Column" of sympathizers with and secret supporters of Franco, which the Communist Party pretends to "see" among the revolutionaries who saved Barcelona from fascism on July 19.

THE REVOLUTION ON THE LAND

The next step of the masses under revolutionary leadership, still without the leadership and against the will of the republican ministers, was the wholesale seizure of the land, whereby the backbone of the economic power behind feudal-military reaction was broken, and the peasant was mobilized, *by revolution*, for the prosecution of the war. Later, the rehabilitated and reconstructed government, finally with a communist in the ungrateful role of official restrainer of land occupation and collectivization (Minister of Agriculture Uribe), sought to limit land seizure to the estates of openly fascist landowners. Whole villages and regions, as the recent trials of the communist Mayors of Villanueva de Alcardete and Villamayor have proved,¹

1. There are scores of such cases pending against village and provincial authorities especially in the regions of Castille. Yet when the C.N.T. and Castilla Libre (both syndicalist papers of Madrid) raised the question of the terrorization of villages and the assassination of the members of their agricultural workers union by rural authorities, the papers in question were repeatedly suppressed. The Mayor of Villanueva de Alcardete was finally sentenced to death not for the attacks made by him and the local Guardia Civil under his leadership against defenseless peasants but because he used his power for the rape and the murder of two peasant girls. For his social crimes he was never brought to account, though they were at last officially recognized at the trial. When Castilla Libre made its accusations against him, it was suppressed by the censorship, and the communist paper, Mundo Obrero, defended the mayor as a "good comrade and proven revolutionist" and charged Castilla Libre with being "provocative and fascist" in its report.

were put back under the leadership of the *caciques*, the old village tyrants in new republican and communist dress, and the center of gravity was shifted from the agricultural workers and poor peasants, mostly anarchists and socialists, to the middle peasants (Spanish equivalent of the Russian kulaks) and the old administrative bureaucracy.

Landowners who were prevented by the rapid enveloping action of the masses from openly declaring their reactionary sympathies, are continued in their possessions and power or, where their estates are partially divided, are to be given compensation. Thus the economic power of rural reaction is to be partially changed in form but not destroyed, while the magnificent initiative of the landworkers and revolutionary peasants which mobilized the countryside for the war against fascism precisely where it is strongest, has been and is being discouraged and destroyed.

(See Mundo Obrero, April 27, 1937). How the Communist Party's present policies lead inevitably to the infiltration of such elements into its ranks is analyzed below.

CHAPTER V

THE ROAD TO VICTORY

“FIRST win the war; then make the revolution.”

The falsity and danger of this slogan becomes obvious as soon as we put the question practically: What is needed for the winning of the war?

To win the war, it will be generally admitted, the following measures are necessary:

1. The creation of a strong government.
2. A powerful, unified and politically reliable army.
3. A reliable safety corps for patrol behind the lines and the ferreting out of fascist nests and counter-revolutionary plots.
4. A unified economy completely subordinated to the winning of the war.
5. An effective appeal to the foreign troops invading the country and to the masses in the countries openly or covertly intriguing against Spain, an appeal which will mobilize them against the present policies of their governments and in favor of at least decent neutrality.
6. A national and colonial policy proper to a free people: autonomy and the right of self-determination and free cooperation for all the national regions of the Spanish peninsula—above all freedom for the Moors.

We have purposely stated these needs in as "neutral" a form as possible. Except for points 5 and 6, they would be pretty universally accepted in governmental Spain. Yet every one of the above measures, upon closer analysis, reveals itself as requiring the extension of the revolution.

A STRONG GOVERNMENT

What is a strong government? One enjoying the full confidence of the masses! One able to mobilize to the maximum that amazing energy, that rich enthusiasm, that proud self-confidence and capacity for initiative that is characteristic of the masses in revolutionary times. Once aroused, it has the irresistible power of an avalanche. But such a government is not something external to the masses; it is the organization of the masses themselves: it is the Paris Commune; it is the faubourgs and club and committees of 1793; it is the Soviets of 1905 and 1917; it is the network of committees that sprang up all over loyal Spain on July 19, 1936. Under the leadership of this embryonic workers and peasants government, the Spanish people armed themselves, recaptured Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, the whole of the provinces of Castille, Castillon, Catalonia, Aragon, Biscay, Asturias, Valencia, much of the rest of Spain. Though still virtually unarmed and entirely untrained, they actually assumed the offensive and defeated and rolled back the trained troops of the professional army in more than two-thirds of Spain! It is the only time, so far in the entire civil

war, that the loyal side has been able to assume the offensive. Once the authority of the impotent, discredited, non-revolutionary Azaña government was restored and the overflowing tide of revolutionary enthusiasm channelized in the moldy ditches of bourgeois republicanism once more, neither arms nor training, nor the fashioning of a trained officers corps, has enabled the government side to assume the offensive again. The systematic sabotage of Catalonia by the Azaña government, precisely because it is the center of revolutionary energy as it is of large scale industry, has not a little to do with this. On the side of reaction is necessarily the superiority in training, equipment, professional officers, and support by foreign reaction. On the popular side, the only offset lies in numbers, in morale, in revolutionary enthusiasm, in the overwhelming tidal wave of the masses in motion that can dissolve opposing armies, create guerrilla support behind the enemy lines, stir up the masses to action in countries intriguing against them, make foreign powers afraid to intervene or paralyze their intervention because the "contagion" of the revolutionary morale "demoralizes" the armies of reaction.

It would have been only a short step from this network of committees and spontaneously created organs of the masses to the consolidation of delegates from factory, village, militia group, into a genuine workers and peasants government. Such governments represent the highest form of democracy the world has ever known (unless we except the primitive tribes). They spring from the masses,

are directly responsive to their wishes, subject to direct instruction and instantaneous recall, are really the masses themselves giving expression to their aroused and all-powerful will in organized form. Such a government would have destroyed the "fifth column" overnight by nationalizing the land, the banks and the factories, the economic basis of fascism and reaction. Only such a government could have created a reliable army, not only worker and peasant in its social composition (all armies are that), but worker and peasant in its officers corps and control—which is decisive in determining the class nature of the army. The Durrutis and Ascascos and Grossis who led the attacks upon the barracks on the first days of the revolution would have become the high command, and such professional military men as might have been used because of their technical knowledge would have been put under the strict control of worker-officers or "commissars." The restoration of unreliable bourgeois officers to the supreme rank and the abolition of control by the workers organizations was to cost the government dear; the betrayal of Malaga, the breach in the impregnable "iron ring" around Bilbao, are only two of the most conspicuous examples of a whole series of betrayals that resulted from a failure to complete the revolutionary reorganization of the army.

COLONIAL POLICY

A workers and peasants government would have freed the Moors, and by radio and proclamation in the Moorish tongue would have mobilized all

North Africa in a wave of enthusiastic solidarity and revolutionary fervor against Franco and his little handful of foreign legionaries. Defeated in the main centers of Spain, he would never have been able to bring the Moors over from Africa. His revolt would have collapsed before a single black-shirt or brown-shirt could have arrived, and swift revolutionary justice would have ended the Spanish military menace forever. How clear it becomes as soon as we analyse the terms "war" and "revolution" instead of treating them as metaphysical abstractions, that to make the revolution (even in this respect alone) would have meant to win the war, and that "first win the war, then make the revolution," means to betray the revolution and to run the danger of losing the war. Indeed, if the Republic had made the agrarian revolution and freed the Moors, disarmed the fascist officers, reorganized the army basing it upon the armed masses, there would never have been any possibility of fascist revolt at all. But a bourgeois coalition government such as that of the People's Front by its very nature is a government of the curbing of the revolutionary will of the masses and a government of slow, concealed and inglorious surrender to fascism and reaction. Today, after more than a year of civil war, the People's Front government has still stubbornly refused to do elementary justice to the Moors and elementary benefit to its own cause by setting them free! By its nature it is a government bound hand and foot by the miserable ambitions of Spanish capitalism and imperialism and the voracious demands of

British and French capital, though both former and latter have betrayed the cause of the Spanish people at every turn.

A revolutionary government would have sent the unreliable Azañas about their business, stripped them of their power and prerogatives, including their power to sabotage the will of the masses, to intrigue with foreign powers, to negotiate possible compromises at the expense of the workers and peasants; in short, it would have stripped them instantly, as the Russian workers did Kerensky in 1917, of all their power to harm. But while militiamen brave death in the trenches at 10 pesetas a day, and workers behind the lines are paid less for their herculean efforts to organize a supply service for the war, Azaña still draws his 1,000,000 pesetas a year in wages and an additional equal sum for expenses, while a horde of budget-hungry officials and deputies continue to drain huge sums needed for the conduct of the war, and Negrin threatens to revive the Chamber of Deputies whose discreditable past should have been sufficient to bury it forever.

A revolutionary government would have nationalized the banking system, thus stopping the flight of capital and devoting all economic resources as well as human to the winning of the war. The present government, despite the pusillanimity of its petty-capitalist soul, is a veritable lion in the persecution of those who would take such revolutionary measures.

A workers and peasants government would have devoted all the economic resources of the land to

the winning of the war. It would have socialized and centralized under its control the whole of industry. Even bourgeois nations establish state capitalism and centralized economic control when they are engaged in life and death struggles—witness the “state socialism” of the world war. Louis Fischer, who cannot be suspected of partisanship in favor of a revolutionary policy in Spain since he has not even hesitated to invent “facts” and slanders against it, was forced to admit that “the stores in Madrid still have heavy stocks of winter underwear, warm blankets, and flannel garments while four kilometers away the men who are defending the city sleep lightly clothed in frozen trenches” (*The Nation*, December 12, 1936). Even a capitalist government with a bit of energy would have seized “everything for the boys at the front” and not let the militiamen in the snow-covered Guadarrama mountains spend the winter in the same overalls in which they had seized the strategic mountain range during the previous July.

REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

But all these revolutionary policies and others which will suggest themselves to the reader if he peruses again the six-point program at the head of this article, require for their conception and execution a revolutionary government with revolutionary policies. As we have seen, it was but a little step from the network of committees, to a permanent government based upon those committees, a workers and peasants government. But this

was not done because the syndicalist and anarchist organizations were prevented by their anarchist prejudices, the socialist and official communist parties by their reformist theories, from taking that next step. The syndicalist workers and peasants were hindered by anarchist training from even contemplating the problem of proletarian power. As usual, "no politics" in working class theory means bourgeois politics in practice. Only proletarian politics (in the revolutionary, not the reformist sense) can prevent the proletariat from being dragged in the political train of the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, the socialist workers were hindered from understanding the needs of proletarian government by decades of social-democratic teachings in favor of bourgeois coalition government. The left wing of the Spanish Socialist Party was just beginning to approach a communist position on the question of class struggle and state power, when it was suddenly confused, demoralized and debauched by an aggressive attack on communist principles, made by the Communist Party itself, which had abandoned them in favor of class-collaboration under the hegemony of the petty bourgeoisie, and the disastrous theory of the People's Front government. The Communist Party was the main driving force both in 1935 and in 1936 to rehabilitate the discredited Azaña.

Only the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (P.O.U.M.) remained true to communist principles and clearly placed the problem of proletarian power and program. It was not strong enough at this stage to swing it alone but by that single act

it made itself the revolutionary leader of the Spanish working class, a position that it has brilliantly maintained despite slander, provocation and persecution by the Republican-Communist Party coalition and it has manifested the requisite revolutionary realism and flexibility to give concrete expression to the needs of the Spanish civil war and revolution at every turn in the complicated events. Slowly it wins ground for this program among the syndicalist, anarchist and socialist workers and the communist youth. We can fittingly close this article by reprinting the program which it offered in April 1937 during the Catalan cabinet crisis of that month. That it should have had to advance such a program almost a year after the civil war and revolution began, indicates how the People's Front government and its supporters, by sabotaging the revolution have hindered and imperilled the winning of the civil war.

THE P.O.U.M.'S PROGRAM FOR THE APRIL CRISIS

1. Socialization of heavy industry and transport.
2. Nationalization of banking.
3. Municipalization of real estate.
4. Building of an army controlled by the working class.
5. Constitution of a single Interior Security Corps, based on the Guard Patrols and the Investigation Corps created by the revolution, and incorporating the old police organizations that have demonstrated their loyalty to the working class.
6. Immediate offensive on the Aragon front.
7. Reduction of high salaries.

8. Monopoly of foreign trade.
9. Creation of a powerful war industry, socialized and rigorously centralized.
10. Nationalization of the land, insuring the product to those who work it and granting them the necessary credits. Collective cultivation of large estates and economic aid for those collective farms created during the course of the revolution which have demonstrated their vitality.
11. Implacable fight against monopolists and profiteers by means of a rigorous direct control of the distribution and price of food-stuffs.
12. Rapid and efficient organization of aerial and naval defense of all our territory.
13. Convocation of a congress of delegates of workers' and peasants' unions and soldiers to lay the fundamental bases of the new regime and from which would arise a workers' and peasants' government—a government which would be the most democratic possible, which would express unequivocally the will of the great majority of the people, and which would have complete authority to ensure the new revolutionary order.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROAD TO COUNTER-REVOLUTION

THE NAME of a political party is no sure guide to its real program. How much have the Democratic and Republican parties of our country to do with "democracy" and "republicanism" respectively? What is there of "radical" or "socialist" in the Radical-Socialist party of France, or of "socialist" or "labor" in the German Nazi party, which calls itself the National Socialist German Labor Party? Not by their names but by their teachings, and above all by their deeds, must the political content of a party's role be judged. To-day in Spain, there is no more bitter opponent of communism than that party which bears the name: Communist Party of Spain. But it differs from the parties mentioned above in that its name once meant what it said. In that respect, it is more closely analogous to the old Social-Democratic Party of Germany or the Menshevik section of the old Russian Social-Democracy, whose names and past prestige were used to cloak the fact that they had become, in their respective lands, outstanding opponents of the things they had formerly espoused.

WHY THE C.P. WAS CHOSEN

On the outbreak of military revolt in July 1936, the old Spanish ruling class was no longer able

to rule in its own name. It was split by the revolt. The "loyal" section was reduced to a mere shell, a group of discredited politicians soiled by their own supineness and even guilty complicity in the preparation of that revolt. The armed masses had entered on the stage of history, not as passive spectators or scene-shifters, but as actors in their own behalf. All the signs, indications and necessities pointed to a workers and peasants government. The ruling class had lost belief in itself: the old politicians, the old shibboleths, had lost their power to sway or bewilder the masses; the old apparatus of force had gone over to fascism and the state had lost its power to suppress. Only a party of the working class could possibly confuse the masses; only shock troops recruited among the workers and acting ostensibly in their name could possibly suppress the masses—and confusion and suppression are the twin poles of capitalist, as of every minority-class rule. The only hope of the Spanish ruling class for continuing the rule of capitalism was to rule through some safe "opposition" party till the crisis should be past. If they could have used the syndicalists or the socialists (and they experimented with both, brought them into the government for a while, and still use their conservative wings), the Spanish bourgeoisie would have preferred them, for their popular following was enormous. But both these parties, despite lack of clarity and consequent unreliability from a proletarian standpoint, were too responsive to the pressure of the working class, too loyal and too democratically run to be dependable.

When German capitalism was in a similar plight in 1918, it had called the Social-Democracy into the government. It was they who crushed the Spartacan revolt that the junkers themselves could never have crushed, put across a bourgeois republic when a soviet republic was on the order of the day, wrote the Weimar Constitution creating a "democratic republic with profound social features" (the very language is being repeated by the Spanish C.P. today!), murdered Liebknecht and Luxemburg as today the Spanish Communist Party has murdered Andres Nin. It was they who "postponed" revolutionary measures while the situation was revolutionary, continued the economic basis of capitalist power, retained the old bureaucratic military apparatus, alienated the backward masses which could only have been won by a revolutionary solution of their needs and jailed or slaughtered the vanguard that urged such measures; it was they who made possible, by these measures, the return of reaction and, under the aegis of a "democratic republic with profound social features," made inevitable the rise of Hitler to power.

The Spanish C.P., which had so often and so lightly bandied about the words "renegade" and "traitor" and "counter-revolutionist," voluntarily and aggressively assumed the renegade, the traitorous, the counter-revolutionary role! Not being the mighty mass force that the German Social-Democracy was in 1918, it cannot fill the role alone. Like Bottom the Weaver, it must play the lion of reaction on the government side, but it cannot

fill the lion's skin. Therefore, discredited republicans like Azaña and Companys, Basque Catholics like Irujo, and right-wing opponents of socialism and workers' rule from the Socialist Party like Negrin and Prieto, help to fill out a paw or a bump, while the Communist Party of Spain roars through the head "as gentle as any sucking dove" in the name of the "people" of Spain. Bottom's gentle roar was calculated, like theirs, not to frighten the honorable spectators he served; but the Communist Party is far from gentle in using claws and fangs to tear to pieces the P.O.U.M., to spring at Largo Caballero when they find he will not play their game, to jail thousands of members of the C.N.T. and U.G.T., and to drive both mighty organizations out of the government for the greater glory of the "democratic republic." How ironical does the term "People's Front" become after the two great trade union centers, between them comprising more than 4,000,000 workers and with their families and dependents more than two-thirds of all the people of Spain, have been driven out of the government of the "People's" Front! What a commentary on C.P. maneuvers and the weakness of Largo Caballero who permitted Azaña, representing no one, to "accept" his resignation when he represented the majority of the Spanish people! Had he had the revolutionary clarity and consistency to demand a showdown as to who had the masses behind him, he or Azaña, there would be no Negrin government today, frantically seeking to resurrect a dead parliament and recall even Maura, the right-

wing opponent of the People's Front, and Valladares, the "neutral" in the civil war, so as to construct some show of legal warrant for their brazen coup d'etat engineered when Azaña bluffed Largo Caballero into resigning his post.

THE ROAD TO DEGENERATION

How, the reader will ask, did the party that once espoused communism and the rule of the working class and so bitterly opposed class collaboration, how did this party come to such a pass that it could assume this role? Its degeneration was gradual—a process, not a single act; and, on its road to counter-revolution, three mile-posts may be distinguished. The first is sectarianism which isolated it from the masses and, made it incapable of furthering the revolutionary cause. During this period, it expelled its best elements (more than half the party!) and became a fanatical opponent of working class unity. The second mile-post is opportunism, the adoption of class collaboration, the sabotaging and scuttling of the united workers front in favor of the bourgeois-led and bourgeois-programmed "People's Front." The third and last mile-post was opposition to the proletarian revolution in July 1936, the conspiracy to drive the U.G.T. and C.N.T. out of the government, the provocation of the May uprising in Barcelona, the frame-up and outlawry of the P.O.U.M. and the murder of Andres Nin. It had travelled a long way on the road to degeneration, and it had reached the end of the road. It is to-

day the chief opponent of socialism, of worker and peasant government, of proletarian revolution, in Republican Spain.

It is worth while to examine its "progress" on this road a little more closely for it points the way the apostles of the "People's Front" are treading in all lands.

THE WITHERING CURSE OF SECTARIANISM

The overthrow of the monarchy in April 1931 came as a complete surprise to the Communist Party. It was occupied with the splitting of the trade unions, the denunciation of all other working class tendencies as agents of fascism or "social-fascism" and the expulsion of the majority of its members, including its founders and outstanding theoretical leaders, such as Joaquin Maurin, for opposing these suicidal tactics as injurious to communism and the working class. The sections of the working class which were closest to communism were denounced with especial bitterness as "left social-fascists," the most dangerous "fascists" of all. So isolated was the party from the masses and so ignorant of their moods and the realities and possibilities of Spanish politics that it did not even participate in the elections of April 1931, the results of which caused Alfonso to flee.

Manuilsky, a Russian leader of the Communist International, declared the events in Spain "of no special significance" and assured the Spanish proletariat, anxious for guidance in the solution of its new problems, that "the smallest strike in Ger-

many is more important than everything that is happening in Spain." Walter Duranty, ever faithful chronicler of Stalinist views, sent a dispatch to the New York Times on April 18, 1931 (four days after the proclamation of the republic) which, in retrospect, assumes a more sinister significance than it seemed to have at the time:

"One would naturally have expected Pravda," wrote Duranty, "to salute the chance of a Spanish proletarian struggle for power with loud and glowing enthusiasm. . . . Instead of that Pravda's first reaction was an editorial as stale as a damp squib."

Clearly, radical-sounding, ultra-leftist sectarianism is as much a desertion of the road to revolution by the "left" fork as opportunism is by the "right."

FIGHTING THE UNITED FRONT "FROM THE LEFT"

The great left swing had begun in the Spanish U.G.T. and Socialist Party but for over two years the C.P. bombarded it with spiteful spitballs labelled "left social-fascism." When in 1933 the gigantic working class united front movement, known as the Alianza Obrera, got under way on the initiative of the P.O.U.M. in Barcelona and spread till it included the socialists, the U.G.T. and important sectors of the C.N.T. and F.A.I., the Communist Party turned its full battery of putty-blowers upon it. It was only at the eleventh hour, or rather a minute before midnight, that the Comintern, beginning its new turn towards the

"People's Front" line, ordered the C.P. of Spain to climb on to the band wagon of the Alianza Obrera as it began its general strike and armed revolt to prevent the peaceful entrance of the fascists into power.¹

FROM ONE EXTREME TO THE OTHER

But the temporary support for the working class united front proved to be only a half way station in the 180° swing that the Comintern was then beginning to make from its old opposition to a workers front on the grounds that no other working class organization is good enough (all but the communists being "social fascists") to its new opposition to the workers front on the ground that

¹ The Alianza Obrera was started in Barcelona in 1933 to defend the working class in the face of growing reaction. In 1934, when the Lerroux government was being prepared with the fascist leader Gil Robles as its Minister of War, the Alianza Obrera prepared the general strike which, in the first days of October, developed into an armed revolt in Asturias and elsewhere. Only on September 11 and 12, 1934, did the Central Committee of the C.P., meeting in secret session, decide to stop fighting the Alianza, a decision which it announced on September 15, less than three weeks before the uprising. When it began, the party had not yet had time to recall from the newstands its pamphlets denouncing the Workers Alliances as "the focal point of all reactionary forces" and "the holy alliance of counter-revolution." All of which did not prevent the Daily Worker from claiming credit for the formation of the Alianzas and the Asturias insurrection, until the Comintern ordered the scuttling of workers' front organizations in favor of the "People's Front"!

all bourgeois-liberal organizations and a bourgeois program are good enough and therefore working class programs and the working class front must be scuttled in the name of a "People's Front."

Hence in 1935, when the heroic example of the Asturias revolt had stirred the working class and shaken the power of the Gil Robles-Lerroux government, when the masses had had their "belly full" of the "democratic republic" with its lamb-like timidity in social reform and its lionlike courage in the defense of property and privilege and were in the mood for the creation of a workers and peasants government, and when the left wing of the Socialist Party had just won a majority for the two communist principles of workers front and workers government, the Communist Party of Spain, under orders from the Comintern, suddenly abandoned the communist position on these two questions in favor of "People's Front" and the bourgeois republic!

THE REHABILITATION OF AZANA

It was the Communist Party which dragged Azaña from oblivion, where he deservedly rested because of his retention of the monarchist military apparatus and his guilt in breaking strikes and shedding peasant blood when he crushed with great ferocity the peasant movement of 1933 centering at Casas Viejas. It was the Communist Party that insisted that not a trade unionist like Largo Caballero but this discredited and blood-stained bourgeois republican politician should be-

come the standard bearer and candidate for prime minister of the People's Front. These moves alienated great sections of the peasantry and nearly cost the election. They completely demoralized the movement for workers front and workers government in the Socialist Party. Azaña drove a shrewd bargain for his class, his price for accepting the nomination being that there should be no talk of workers and peasants government nor arming of the workers and peasants and disarming of the reaction and that the People's Front program should expressly reject the revolutionary expropriation of the large landowners, the nationalization of the state bank, socialization of industry and even a state unemployment system.

The demands of the People's Front were made to center upon a mere amnesty law for political prisoners (which the aroused masses enforced by opening the prisons themselves), whereas even a bourgeois republican 'People's Front' government should have had as its minimum demand at least the disarming of the reaction, thereby rendering impossible the military revolt that every one knew of and was talking about. But Azaña made it a condition of his deigning to accept the nomination as standard-bearer that this demand should not be made! And the Communist Party was willing to betray the republic to these Captains-Generals who later rose in the anticipated and long prepared revolt, merely for the sake of People's Front collaboration with such agents of the big bourgeoisie as Azaña whose influence over the petty bourgeoisie it should have been their

major task to annihilate. The argument of the Comintern was that such class collaboration was necessary to "win an alliance with the petty bourgeoisie." But actually this drove the petty bourgeoisie back into the arms of the big bourgeoisie. In place of the lower middle class following the proletariat, it followed the great bourgeoisie, while the proletariat followed it and on a program such as an Azaña could dictate.

HIND SIGHT

On September 8, 1936, José Diaz, leader of the Spanish C.P., was to admit in writing that "the Azaña regime was very hesitating. . . . We knew that fascism could not triumph except through the military. The prime necessity was therefore to purge the army. . . . Unfortunately the latter (the People's Front government) did not realize that it would have to make sweeping changes instead of limiting itself to a shifting of officers if a catastrophe was to be averted. . . . The putsch of July 18th surprised no one. Preparations had already been completed before the elections. . . ."

But this amazing confession was made *after* the uprising, at the high tide of mass initiative and revolution, when Azaña had retreated to his monastery and the Largo Caballero government with U.G.T. and C.N.T. representation was in the offing. It did not prevent the José Diazes from provoking the crisis of May 1937 in which they persuaded none other than Azaña to return once more from retirement (a treachery thrice repeated

is surely the limit of conscious treason!) and to demand the resignation of Largo Caballero, oust the representatives of the 4,000,000-headed organized labor movement of the U.G.T. and C.N.T. and set up, as the representatives of the "people," the miserable minority government of right-wing socialists, bourgeois republicans, and Basque Catholics, plus the C.P., with the ill-omened Azaña as the real boss once more! It is this government which has outlawed the P.O.U.M., murdered Andres Nin and is attempting to outlaw the C.N.T., the F.A.I. and the Caballero majority of U.G.T.

THE COMINTERN DECIDES THE "LINE"

Long before the "People's Front" dispensation (back in 1933 when the situation was far less revolutionary), the Comintern had declared:

"The choice in Spain is between the dictatorship of the proletariat and fascist revolution."²

But now, in the face of the proletarian revolution already begun, it gives the Spanish Communist Party instructions to "defend and *consolidate* the democratic parliamentary republic which *guarantees* (shades of Marx and Lenin!) all the rights and liberties of the Spanish people." It instructs "the defending and consolidating of the republic of the People's Front in which *the material basis of fascism will be undermined*" and, though the material basis of fascism is the private ownership of industry and agriculture, the same

² Inprecorr, Dec. 15, 1933, p. 1242.

resolution directs the Spanish C.P. to fight "against the wholesale nationalization of industry" and for nationalization only in the case of factories belonging to persons participating directly or indirectly in the rebellion." And it further endorses the "guarding and protecting of the property rights and interests of the small and *middle* owners. . . ." (All emphasis mine—B.D.W.)³

In the carrying out of this line, the Communist Party was more than zealous. In October 1936 it organized the middle peasants (kulaks) and rural bourgeoisie into a specially created "Peasant Union" to fight the twenty-year-old U.G.T. and C.N.T. agricultural workers unions—on the pretense that the latter were forcing the peasants into collectivization against their will. The kind of rural elements that rallied to this focal point for the defense of landed property may be judged by the typical case of Jativa where the former head of the local civil guard, who had arrested Julio Fuster Miralles, local leader of the U.G.T. agricultural union scores of times, became president of the C.P. peasants union! And hardened socialist opportunists like Margaret Nelkin, who in 1932 had told Ilya Ehrenburg: "I find myself forced

³ All the above quotations are taken from the "Decision of Presidium of E.C.C.I. on Work of Communist Party in Spain," published in the Daily Worker of Jan. 24, 1937. The secret instructions which accompanied and preceded them are not a matter of public record but that they went even farther on the road of counter-revolution can be seen by the actual conduct of the Communist Party of Spain.

to use all possible means of restraining the peasants who want to revolt," hastened to join the Communist Party as more conservative than the Prieto-Negrin or Besteiro wings of the S.P.

UNION CARDS FOR THE BOURGEOISIE

In the countryside it organized the kulaks, the police agents, the caciques, the rural bourgeoisie. In the cities it became the organization of the professional bureaucrats, the small business men, speculators and owners of small and even large factories and agencies. In Madrid the former owner of the General Motors Agency expressed to me openly his expectation that Franco would win, his hatred of the anarchists, syndicalists and P.O.U.M., his plans to escape the country if necessary with his hoardings, his stratagems to collect money undisturbed from his business as its "wage-earning manager" and responsible representative. Believing he was dealing with an ordinary American newspaperman, he offered to sell me rare masterpieces, including an El Greco, for smuggling out of the country. When I asked him how he got away with all this, he showed me his union membership card in the U.G.T.! When I asked prostitutes at the Hotel Florida how they could get food there when soldiers on leave from the front were turned away, they too displayed their membership cards in the U.G.T.

In Madrid that is an exception but in Catalonia there was virtually no U.G.T. when the civil war broke out. Here the C.N.T. had always had a

virtual monopoly. But now the P.S.U.C. (Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia, affiliated with the Communist Party of Spain) has taken up the cause of the Catalonian bourgeoisie with a will. Its numbers swelled in no time from a few hundred to many tens of thousands. Its membership are not, as they undoubtedly are in Madrid, made up largely of front-fighters. As in Madrid, they have the bourgeois republican bureaucracy, but in Catalonia the front fighters are overwhelmingly syndicalist, anarchist and P.O.U.M.ist. In addition to the bureaucracy, they have recruited countless small and even middle business men, office workers, bank clerks and bank "managers" (the old managers and petty usurers fitted out with union cards) and they have gained complete control of the brand new Catalonian U.G.T. sectors which they have organized to fight Largo Caballero in the U.G.T. and to fight the C.N.T., the workers' organization in Catalonia. It was this "U.G.T." that was paraded in the columns of the Daily Worker as having repudiated Largo Caballero. It was these P.S.U.C. members who, while they furnished but few fighters for the front, supplied the shock troops of reaction in the rear that invaded the telephone exchange and syndicalist and anarchist headquarters in May 1937, provoking a spontaneous uprising even while Bilbao was in danger, because they were determined to disarm the Catalonian workers.

A trade union page of their official organ would make a seasoned trade unionist's hair stand on end. One finds notices of a meeting of the "Employees of

Bank, Bourse and Exchange," who of course adopt a resolution against the nationalization of banking; of the "Government Officials and Employees of the Generalidad"; of the "Egg Dealers Section with Egg Cards of the Union of Dealers in Meat, Game and Poultry." (I assure the reader that these are literal translations!) All of Barcelona's petty, and not so petty, food speculators crowd into the U.G.T. the better to defend their vile profiteering in the necessities of life while Spain is burning. A typical entry from this source in the trade union columns of the Communist Press reads:

"The Federation of Delicatessens, Foods and Allied Branches (U.G.T.), composed of Retail Food Dealers of this City, . . . makes known its enthusiastic adherence to any campaign for the cheapening of food stuffs. . . . It is ready to prove by producing the bills (familiar tradesman's language!) that the price rise is not made in the food establishments but its origins must be sought in the centers of production and wholesale middlemen." This is their answer to a demonstration against war profiteering in the necessities of life, and it makes it clear why such situations can exist, as described by Louis Fischer, that the militiamen can shiver in winter in the trenches of the snow-capped Guadarrama range while the stores are full of warm woolen things. The employees of these same food speculators, organized in the Food Workers Union of the C.N.T., answered them with a publication of price lists as proofs that

their unionized employers were in fact guilty of speculation.

But most amazing of all the affiliates of the U.G.T. of Catalonia is the celebrated G.E.P.C.I., the Federation of Owners of Small Commerce and Industry, with many separate employers "unions" affiliated to it! It is the most brilliant invention of the Communist Party in its guerrilla war against workers of Catalonia organized in the C.N.T. and against the P.O.U.M. and against all measures of socialization and revolution. It is in the "Peasants Union," the P.S.U.C., the Catalan U.G.T., and C.P. of Spain that the real reserves of the much-heralded "fifth column" can be found.

Now, the reader can begin to understand why there is a joke current in Spain that "if a man is too conservative to join the Republicans he joins the communists." H. H. Brailsford, who endorses the line of the Communist Party in Spain and opposes that of the P.O.U.M., wrote of the May days of 1937:

"This was, like the Spartacist tragedy in Berlin, a struggle between reformism and the will to make a proletarian revolution. P.O.U.M. . . . represented the older and now heretical communist position."

Of the Communist Party he wrote that it "now constitutes the moderate center party in republican Spain." And, of its new composition, he offered the explanation and boast of one of its Catalan leaders:

"Much of the new membership," said the leader in question, "has come from the ranks of the *Equerra* (left middle-class Republicans). The

small middle class realizes that of the two parties ours is the stouter defender of small property."

And so, he might have added, does the biggest bourgeoisie as well. From degeneration in analysis and tactics (ultra-leftist period) to degeneration in theory and principle (People's Front period) to degeneration in historic role (counter-revolutionary driving force in Republican Spain) to degeneration in the composition of its membership—for in the long run a party attracts the support of those it serves—such has been the road of degeneration of the Communist Party of Spain. Today, nothing remains of its communism but the name and, upon that it daily brings disgrace that makes all true communists blush for shame. And, in pronouncing its traitor's epitaph, we cannot hide from ourselves the fact that we are also pronouncing the epitaph of the Communist International whose leadership dictated this policy. It can no more survive the murder of Andres Nin and the attack on the Spanish revolution than the Second International did the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg and the struggle against proletarian revolution in Germany and Russia. In its ranks are still many thousands of good proletarian revolutionaries but, as a revolutionary international, it is committing suicide in Spain.

CHAPTER VII

"TROTSKYISM" AND THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

NOTHING is more astonishing in the whole history of the Spanish civil war than the determination of the Stalinists to give Trotsky credit for the revolutionary sections of the U.G.T. and C.N.T., for the armed defense of workers rights by the Barcelona workers last May, and for the policies and existence of the P.O.U.M.! Certainly, it is not a falsehood calculated to injure or destroy Trotsky, but rather to rehabilitate him. And what is more, it is a credit he does not in the slightest deserve.

As once the First International was regarded as at the bottom of every strike occurring in the world, and even of the Chicago fire and the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, so today Trotsky is given credit by the Stalin fiction-factory for every revolutionary movement in capitalist lands, and for leadership (ten years after his exile!) of every autonomous republic in the Soviet Union, control of every premier and party secretary, of every provincial soviet, of the general staff of the Red Army, the leadership of the G.P.U., twenty-seven out of seventy members of the Central Committee, two members of the Politburo, ten heads of the planning commission, the entire leadership of the youth, and every piece of spoiled pork, every mismated pair of breed cattle, every

grain weevil and every train wreck occurring over the socialist sixth of the earth! Truly Paul Bunyan and his big blue ox shrink into Lilliputian insignificance before this newest titanic anti-hero of Soviet folk lore; and, as for Baron Muenchausen, let him look to his laurels! It is time he applied for admission to the "Lenin" School at Moscow for elementary instruction in art of which he once passed as a master.

The simple facts in the case are:

1. The P.O.U.M. is not Trotskyist. Its membership and leadership come predominantly from the Communist Party, the Catalonian section of which was expelled in bloc during the ultra-left wave of 1929, for rejecting union-splitting, for advocating the tactics of the united front, for opposing the stupid theory that the rest of the working class was "social fascist", for objecting to the mechanical transference of tactics to Spain which had no connection with Spanish realities. Its outstanding leader was Joaquin Maurin, repeatedly and bitterly attacked by Trotsky as "centrist", "opportunist", petty-bourgeois", "main misleader of the Spanish proletariat", "Menshevik traitor" and similar choice epithets. (Stalin, it appears, has no monopoly on the vocabulary of factional abuse.) In his gentler moods, Trotsky pronounced "Maurinism . . . a mixture of petty bourgeois prejudices, ignorance, provincial science and petty politics", and concluded that ". . . the first step on the road to a revolutionary party in Spain must be to denounce the political vulgarity of Maurin-

ism. In this, we must have no mercy". And, in justice to Trotsky's handful—I am not using the word factionally as is so often the custom but literally and descriptively—in justice to Trotsky's handful of followers in Spain be it said, this "first step" they have repeatedly taken and they are still marking time at the starting point indicated by their master on their "road to a revolutionary party in Spain".

2. Two of the leaders of the P.O.U.M., Andres Nin and Juan Andrade, were former followers of Trotsky. They broke with him almost five years ago when they rejected his instructions to enter the Second International. They fused with the Maurinists to form the P.O.U.M. as a united organization in September 1935. Since then, Trotsky has variously honored them as "a mere tail of the 'left' bourgeoisie", "the traitors Nin and Andrade" (this after the outbreak of the Spanish civil war!) and has declared that "in Spain, genuine revolutionists will no doubt be found who will mercilessly expose the betrayal of Maurin, Nin, Andrade and Co., and lay the foundation for the Spanish Section of the Fourth International" (January 22, 1936).

3. The Trotskyites are not members of the P.O.U.M. The P.O.U.M. has a standing order for the expulsion of all Trotskyites. *La Batalla* has carried a number of articles polemizing against Trotskyism, not in the "merciless", arrogant and insulting tone with which only Russians like Stalin and Trotsky can write of even their best political

elements if they do not happen to serve their factional purposes in the party feud in the Soviet Union, but in a factual and theoretical form which both Trotskyites and Stalinites alike have long given up or forgotten.

4. The Trotskyites in Spain (there were fourteen of them by actual count when I was there, and all but one or two were Belgian, French and Italian refugees, not Spaniards) have an organ of their own, appearing once every two months, called *La Voz Leninista*. Its main fire is directed against the P.O.U.M. Its issue of April 1937 declares: "You cannot argue with honesty that the P.O.U.M. is a truly revolutionary party . . . It substitutes Maurinism for Leninism, rhetoric for dialectics, public demonstrations for political agitation (! ! ! What do you make of that, reader?—B.D.W.) . . . Under cover of following 'the peculiarities of the Spanish revolution', the leaders of the P.O.U.M. have done everything possible to strangle it. . . ."

During the May Days the Trotskyites were guilty of forging a leaflet in the name of the "P.O.U.M.-C.N.T.-F.A.I." with only the obscure initials "B.L." in small type to hint that it did not come from those organizations but, as a Hawkshaw or a Holmes might perhaps have been able to deduce, from the "Bolshevik-Leninists," whose very name, much less initials, was unknown to the Spanish workers.

5. The July 1937 English Edition of the *Bulletin of the International Buro for the Fourth In-*

ternational, issued after the May events while the P.O.U.M. is underground and its best leaders assassinated or in jail for their revolutionary activities, declares that the P.O.U.M. leaders are "Menshevik traitors who cover themselves with quasi-Bolshevik formulas." It urges "a split in the P.O.U.M." and, noting growing friendly relations between the P.O.U.M. and the International Communist Opposition (the international grouping to which our American I.C.L.L. belongs), the *Bulletin* concludes: "He who remains connected with the Brandlers . . . can only betray the proletariat on the very eve of the combat or during the combat." While the French Trotskyites were smashing the United Front for the Defense of the Spanish Revolution by their turning it into a divided front for attacks upon the P.O.U.M., the American Trotskyites were preparing an article (published in the *Socialist Appeal*) which declared: "Are there still comrades abroad who believe the P.O.U.M. can be reformed, or that the demand for a new party would be premature?"

FACTIONALISM IN ALL COUNTRIES

Nowhere do these two Russian factions, Stalinism and Trotskyism, show their bankruptcy as constructive revolutionary forces more clearly than in Spain. Here is a living revolutionary struggle. Here is the P.O.U.M., the best revolutionary party that the Spanish working class has produced—nay more, the best mass revolutionary party in the entire capitalist world. Stalinism, whose role in

Spain has become directly counter-revolutionary, tries to crush it, demands its outlawry as the price of aid to republican-bourgeois Spain in tanks and planes and diplomacy. Surely one would think that Trotskyism would give the P.O.U.M. support—constructive and comradely criticism where necessary, and the most whole-hearted ungrudging solidarity and support. But no! Trotskyism, like Stalinism, believes that the fact that the Russians have made a victorious revolution gives them the monopoly of leadership of all movements throughout the world. In practice, neither can tolerate any movement anywhere in the world that does not recognize its leadership and factional aims in the controversy in the Russian party. The P.O.U.M. rejects the plan for the formation, at this time, of a Fourth International. Hence Trotsky makes open war upon it; calls for a split; substitutes destructive criticism and division for constructive criticism and support. In Spain, as elsewhere, the Trotskyites prove themselves to be in practice a disruptive and destructive force.

But a still more puzzling question remains unanswered: Why then does Stalinism seek to make Trotsky responsible for the P.O.U.M.? Why does it give the Trotskyites credit for a heroic revolutionary struggle, for a brilliant example of leadership under most difficult conditions, a leadership superior to that which the Communist Party of Germany gave the German workers when Hitler seized power, superior to that which Austrian socialists and communists gave the Austrian work-

ers when Dollfuss seized power, the best leadership, with all its deficiencies, that any working class in open struggle has had since 1917? What can the motive of Stalin be in giving Trotsky a new lease on life, credit for a struggle which he has merely sabotaged and has not led?

Trotsky has explained it in part with his theory of "amalgams." Stalin finds it convenient to amalgamate all his opponents and critics in a single enemy mass—Bukharin and Trotsky and Tuchahevsky and Hitler and Franco and Japan. But amalgams do not explain the false prominence given to Trotsky in the amalgam. Trotsky seems to imagine that all the latest executions and frameups in the Soviet Union were made chiefly to frame him up. On the contrary, he has been made into a devil and given credit for leadership of the whole opposition to Stalin growing up in the Russian party and including every field of Soviet and party life, in order to frame up that new opposition. To do this, Stalin is ready to give Trotskyism something of a new and undeserved lease on life in the capitalist world. And he is willing to credit him with a leadership, ten years after his exile, of all the departments of soviet life, of army, navy, G.P.U., planning commission, provincial parties and autonomous republics and their governments. That is why Paul Bunyan has become a pigmy, Ananias a symbol of timorous veracity, and Baron Muenchausen's adventures have come to sound as sober and truthful as the pages of Noah Webster or of the telephone book.

CHAPTER VIII

ANARCHISM, SOCIALISM AND THE P.O.U.M.

THE SPANISH labor movement is about evenly divided between anarcho-syndicalism and socialist trade unionism. Spain is the only country in the world where syndicalism and anarchism are still mass forces. Anarchism has lingered longest in the countries of backward industry, weak bourgeoisie, numerous and radical peasantry, and strong survivals of feudalism and clericalism. It has survived longer and been more influential in Southern Europe than in Northern, in Latin countries than in Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic, in Catholic countries than in Protestant. In proportion as the bourgeoisie becomes powerful and modern industry and an industrial proletariat develop, anarcho-syndicalism tends to evolve and develop in the direction of Marxian socialism and socialist trade unionism. Therefore France is less anarchist than Italy; Italy less so than Spain.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SPANISH PEASANTRY

The Spanish industrial working class is largely a peasantry in overalls. But yesterday, it left its native village where it had lived for centuries, to enter into the great centers of newly developed modern industry. It is a peasantry for which there

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is no counterpart in Europe. Nearly a third of the rural population consists of landworkers. An amazing proportion of these are organized or have passed through and remain sympathetic to labor organizations. Nearly another third of the rural population consists of share-croppers and yet another near-third consists of poor peasant families with insufficient landholdings for the maintenance of life at a human level. The layer of small and middle peasants owning sufficient land to maintain a regular livelihood is so thin as to be lost in the total rural mass; while the large landowners, mostly absentees, and few in total number, own more than a third of the surface of Spain and maintain much of it out of cultivation or cultivated on the exorbitant rent, feudal dues, or share-cropping basis. The peasantry and landworkers as a whole make up one of the most rebellious rural populations in Europe. They are accustomed to spontaneous local insurrections against local tyrants, and to prolonged periods of guerrilla warfare. The habit of seeing only the local tyrant, of the unplanned and spontaneous local uprising, of the taking of justice into their own hands, of "direct action" and guerrilla struggle, gives much of the ideology and outlook to the anarcho-syndicalist masses that have newly entered into industry.

SPANISH ANARCHISM

The theoretical arsenal of anarchism is derived from petty-bourgeois radicalism. It cherishes still

the abstract shibboleths of the bourgeois Jacobin revolutionaries: liberty, equality, fraternity. There is no uniformity of ideology: liberty means first of all liberty for almost any "apostol" of anarchism to write almost anything he pleases in the great anarcho-syndicalist press. Gonzalo de Reparaz, venerable geographer and apologist for "enlightened" imperialism in North Africa, speaks in favor of his pet colonial scheme and the *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* publishes it as a pamphlet with a warm and glowing introduction concerning the great "libertarian thinker who never compromised his ideas"! Anarchism is a species of courageous, unplanned, unscientific, and sporadic action on the part of men who are easily made drunk by glowing phrases, the political content of which they never trouble to analyze. Their idea of the revolution is a series of "down withs" and "up withs"—down with the state, the church, authority; up with liberty, free thought, brotherhood and libertarian communism. They are not troubled with problems of strategy and tactics, have no clear conception of the road to victory, and as the virtue corresponding to that defect, they have the stubborn courage to fight and fight and fight regardless of the odds, and never to know when they are defeated.

Their ideas on tactics are largely negative. The theory of "no proletarian politics" leads in practice to forcing the proletariat, when it wants to enter into politics, to support the left bourgeoisie, or remain passive, while the right bourgeoisie wins.

Hence when they gave only a negative answer to the proletariat in 1931, the masses supported the republican bourgeoisie swelling a little clique of compromising and cowardly nonentities into a great force. The question then became: Who should take power, proletariat or bourgeoisie? The anarchist answer was: We do not believe in proletarian state power—down with all states! The result in practice was the bourgeois republican state power. Again, in 1936, the anarchists having no proposal for proletarian politics, fell an easy victim of the bourgeois politics of the "People's Front" and supported Azaña in the elections!

When the civil war began, they were forced to take sides once more. Again it was for the U.G.T. and C.N.T. to decide to take power. The C.N.T. rejected the idea of the proletarian state, and was forced therefore to support once more and help resuscitate the bourgeois state. Being obliged to enter politics, they postponed the carrying out of their theories "for the duration of the war" (What kind of revolutionary theories are those which must be postponed during civil war?) and they sent four anarcho-syndicalists into the government as cabinet ministers. In the cabinet, these Ministers of Justice, Commerce, Industry, and Health (all of whom I interviewed except the last) were utterly at sea, with no proletarian politics of their own, and proved easy instruments of reactionary bourgeois politics. The anarchist Minister of Justice holds the nominal responsibility, and more than nominal, for all the reactionary decrees

which restored the bourgeois civil code, the bourgeois judges, lawyers, courts, and the laws of censorship, and political and labor repression under which the reaction is now being carried on.

When Largo Caballero resigned, their position became untenable and they were forced out with him. Since then, they have expelled the heroes who led the May uprising, tamely submitted to a censorship of their press without even attempting to carry on the publication and circulation of an underground press, have been shamefully silent (under censorship orders, of course) about the suppression of the P.O.U.M. and the murder of scores of the best members of the C.N.T. and F.A.I. and the jailing of thousands of their members by the Negrin government. They criticize him only as far as the censorship will permit, and their chief criticism is that he does not invite them back into the government!

So much for the anarchist and syndicalist leadership. Of the rank and file, there is a brighter story to tell. They it is who formed the backbone of the proletarian insurrection on July 19, 1936 which saved Spain from fascism. They it is who, despite cowardly and compromising leadership, formed the backbone of the May resistance to reaction in 1937. It is their pressure which prevents their leadership from going the whole hog in bourgeois politics. They have led in the seizure of the large landed estates and factories. They formed the "Friends of Durruti" which issued as its May Day Manifesto the following demands:

"1. All power to the working class.

"2. All economic power to the unions.

"3. Democratic organs of the workers, peasants and combatants as expression of proletarian power.

"4. As against the Generalidad (Catalonian bourgeois government.—B.D.W.) the Revolutionary Junta." (Junta means council or committee.—B.D.W.)

And they it is who apparently determine the policy of the much more revolutionary paper *C.N.T.* of Madrid that has dared to defend the the P.O.U.M. despite the censorship and to carry on a propaganda for proletarian revolution and proletarian power.

Clearly, anarcho-syndicalism is in transition in Spain: its right wing and dominant leadership have adapted their impossible negative position on politics to the requirements of bourgeois politics, and are on the road that was followed by Jouhaux in France. Their most advanced masses and left wing—the industrial proletariat of Barcelona and Madrid and many Catalonian towns, who made the revolution of July 1936, are, like their leaders, adapting themselves to politics, but it is to proletarian politics. They are on the road to Marxian revolutionary socialism and alliance or close union with the P.O.U.M.

SPANISH SOCIALISM

The center of anarchist trade unionsism has always been Catalonia, where the bourgeoisie was

radical and separatist and "federalist." This has left its impress upon Spanish anarchism.

The center of socialist trade unionism has always been Madrid where the bourgeoisie was liberal, bureaucratic and centralist. This has left its impress on Spanish socialism. Indeed, anarchism is an offshoot of petty-bourgeois radicalism as socialism is an offshoot of petty-bourgeois republican liberalism in Spain. Both movements—or the best elements in them—are today under the hammer blows of civil war tending to converge in the direction of Marxian socialism.

But historically, as we have indicated, the Union General de Trabajadores (U.G.T.), under the leadership of the Largo Caballero wing of the Socialist Party, has been republican, centralist, class-collaborationist (or in modern terms, "people's frontish"). It developed solid, moderate, well-organized trade unions with a high respect for union rules and constitutions, a fair degree of trade union democracy and an elementary class consciousness, more trade union than socialist in outlook.

Francisco Largo Caballero, solid proletarian leader who did not learn to read till he was twenty and who has gone seven times to jail for his convictions, is no "Spanish Lenin" as he has so often been called. He does not have the capacity for rich and many-sided analysis, nor the ability to foresee events and to lead the masses with him. His strength lies in a certain deep and abiding faith in unionism and organization and the rank

and file. He does not see things much ahead of the common rank and filer, but is strong because he gives eloquent and courageous expression to their views and needs when he does grasp them. Rarely has Largo Caballero taken a single step forward without history's giving him a swift kick from behind. He learns slowly, empirically.

As a short sighted trade unionist trying to save union conditions under a military dictatorship, he actually made a deal with the Dictator Primo de Rivera and became an instrument of his government. It took him years to discover that military dictatorship was incompatible with the will and needs of the masses, their short range interests as well as their long range aims. Then he became a left republican and his Socialist Party helped the Azañas into power when the proletariat might have taken power itself in 1931. Thus, the negative attitude of the anarcho-syndicalists towards proletarian political power combined with the class-collaboration attitude of the socialists to give power to the feeble petty bourgeois republicans in 1931, as again in 1936, when at either time, had the proletariat had adequate leadership, it might easily and almost painlessly have taken power itself.

Once more Largo Caballero learned his lesson, though slowly, and by 1934-5 was coming to comprehend the need of a proletarian united front as against the bourgeois "people's front" and of workers government as against bourgeois republic. But just then the Communist Party of Spain made

its disastrous right swing to the class-collaboration bourgeois-republican theory that Largo Caballero and his party were painfully struggling to abandon. It thus confused and demoralized the hesitant and newborn socialist left wing and drove Largo Caballero backward toward the "People's Front" deal of 1936 which resuscitated Azaña.

In the Fall of 1936 Largo Caballero thanks to his theoretical unclarity and old coalition tendencies, was once more used by the bourgeois republican-communist coalition as premier to pave the way for the restoration of bourgeois dictatorial rule. Once more he learned but slowly, but when the Communist Party provoked the Barcelona May resistance without even consulting him, and then faced him with an ultimatum that he must participate in forgery and frame up against the P.O.U.M. and the outlawry of the party of proletarian revolution, his sense of honesty was outraged and he became partially aware of the role he was playing.

"If the Caballero government were to apply the measures of suppression to which the Spanish section of the Communist International is trying to incite it," he wrote, "then it would come close to a government of Gil Robles or Lerroux; it would destroy the unity of the working class and expose us to the danger of losing the war and shipwrecking the revolution. . . . A government composed in its majority of people from the labor movement cannot make use of methods that are reserved for

reactionary governments and governments tending toward fascism."

The communist cabinet members then provoked a crisis by resigning and Largo Caballero fell into the trap of presenting a collective resignation of his cabinet to Azaña with the understanding that he was to form a new cabinet. Instead "the Government of Victory" was formed under Negrin, with Prieto, old right-wing socialist and opponent of proletarian policy in the Socialist Party, as its real leader, and with Basque Catholics (the "Government of Victory" promptly lost the entire Basque country!), bourgeois republicans, and Communist Party members making up the rest of the cabinet.

Largo Caballero moved once more a little way to the left, but still lacks the energy and vision to assume a directly revolutionary policy.

THE ROLE OF THE P.O.U.M.

There is one more force to be dealt with, the P.O.U.M.; but it is impossible to treat of it adequately in the limits of this brief series. To do so would be to treat all the tactical and strategical problems of the proletarian revolution in Spain, whose best representative it is. If Spain has not yet produced a "Spanish Lenin," the nearest thing to it is Joaquin Maurin, who has brilliantly applied the general principles of Marxism to the intricate and peculiar specific problems of the Spanish revolution at every one of its stages. His party avoided the pitfalls of sectarianism in 1931,

and, too weak to lead the proletariat to a struggle for power it has worked steadily to prepare itself and the masses for that necessary step. The P.O.U.M. initiated the movement for the Alianza Obrera (proletarian united front) in 1932 and 1933, which by 1934 was strong enough to lead the Asturian uprising. It worked tirelessly to overcome the anarchist prejudices of the syndicalists and the bourgeois-liberal coalition tendencies of the socialists. It fought for trade union unity between C.N.T. and U.G.T. when every one else considered that an absurdity. Today it is no longer a subject for ridicule though there are still many obstacles in its path. The P.O.U.M. fought the "People's Front" in 1935 but was not strong enough to prevent the syndicalists, anarchists, socialists, communists and republicans from coming together on the narrow program of amnesty for the victims of the Asturian uprising. Having failed to convince the masses, it had the choice of cutting itself off from them and boycotting the elections, or setting up rival candidates with possibly enough votes to throw the closely contested election to Gil Robles and the fascists, or to go along under protest. This it did, criticising the People's Front coalition and giving notice that it would break with the Popular Front right after the election. It was true to its word. In July 1936 it played a truly honorable role and swelled rapidly from about 6,000 to 50,000 members. Again it was not strong enough to lead a struggle for power and decided upon the strategy of maintaining

contact with the masses and urging such struggle, but not attempting it except if it could win decisive sections of the million-headed U.G.T. and C.N.T. proletarian organizations for that effort.

Its crucial test came in May 1937 when it advised the workers of Barcelona against an armed struggle knowing that they were not strong enough nor clear enough in their aims, to take power. But being provoked, the Barcelona proletariat resisted disarmament and found itself forced on the streets. Then when the C.N.T. and F.A.I. abandoned their masses, the P.O.U.M., like the Bolsheviks in July 1917, decided to support the doomed movement in order to help the masses in a successful retreat. For this it was outlawed, and as Lenin and the Bolsheviks were framed as "Kaiser agents" in July 1917 by Kerensky and driven into hiding and outlawed, so the P.O.U.M. has been framed as a "Franco agent" in May 1937, Nin murdered and the party driven underground. But thereby the little party has grown up and gone over from revolutionary propaganda in the abstract to the real leadership of the most advanced sectors of the Spanish proletariat. Despite the savage persecution, the P.O.U.M. has not been crushed. Its papers appear underground: *La Batalla* as an uncensored weekly circulates in tens of thousands of copies; millions of leaflets have been distributed; the party grows in strength and determination and wins respect, admiration, support, adherents alike in the camp of Socialism and anarcho-syndicalism.

CHAPTER IX

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR SPAIN?

IT IS difficult to forecast the future of Spain for there are at this moment too many "unknown quantities." One of them is the ultimate extent of foreign intervention, a second is the nearness of the next world war; a third is the rapidity with which the Spanish proletariat will find its head and rally to the program of the P.O.U.M. which alone promises the possibility of victory.

As to the "Government of Victory," it has brought, as was inevitable from its composition and nature, nothing but defeats: defeat in international diplomacy where it has become a plaything in the treacherous hands of British and French diplomats; defeat on the field of battle where it has destroyed the initiative of the masses and consolidated Franco's forces. Franco can only be defeated by a revolutionary war. A revolutionary war can only be waged by a revolutionary government. If the Spanish government would give the land to the peasants, the factories to the workers, then the workers and peasants on Franco's side would be stirred to desertion, to insurrection, to guerrilla warfare. If they would give freedom to the North African colonies, the Moorish armies would melt away and come over to their side. A revolutionary policy in Spain would arouse the

slumbering British labor movement and French masses and they would bring such pressure on their governments as would force them to behave differently, or such governments would become so unpopular that they would fall. A revolutionary military policy with officers from the workers organizations and revolutionary military commissars where old officers had to be used for technical purposes, would put an end to the chain of betrayals which have lost Malaga, Cordoba, Bilbao, Santander, and a half dozen other strongholds. A revolutionary policy would stir the Italian peasants to revolt, who lose no love on Mussolini and have no desire to fight his war on Spanish workers and peasants.

"A people that wants to win its independence," Engels once wrote, "cannot limit itself to ordinary means of war. Uprising in mass, revolutionary war, guerrillas everywhere, that is the only means through which a small nation can get the better of a big one, a less strong army be put in a position to resist a stronger and better organized one."

But from uprising in mass, from general insurrection, the reactionary government shrinks in fear. Now as always, the bourgeois republicans are more afraid of the armed working class than of Franco, more afraid of socialism than fascism. So the Government of Defeats is also the government of Reaction. It disarms the revolutionary working class and their organizations; it lessens each day the effectiveness of its revolutionary appeal to the masses behind the lines of General

Franco, helping him materially in the consolidation of the fascist rear. Its methods of warfare, like its methods of rule, approach closer and closer to his. It establishes a censorship, not military but political, on the workers organizations. It talks of the democratic republic but violates civil liberties, abolishes freedom of the press for the U.G.T. and C.N.T., that is for the majority of its people, and becomes a minority dictatorship ruling with the bayonet. It outlaws the proletarian revolution and the party that gives expression to it.. It uses military force to oust Largo Caballero from the leadership of his unions, on the pretense that it is backing up the will of provincial committees which exist only on paper, have never paid dues, and represent no one. A mysterious Asturian Federation delegation appears and pretends to speak for the Asturian miners. The Asturian miners repudiate it, but Largo Caballero is prevented from publishing the repudiation (by a "military" censorship to protect "military secrets") prevented from speaking, put under virtual arrest. Each day fresh workers of the P.O. U.M., C.N.T., U.G.T., F.A.I. crowd the jails. How can they defeat Franco when there are over 10,000 proletarian prisoners in Negrin's jails, the best fighting blood of Spain? Each day the "Government of Victory" meets fresh defeats. Each day the government of the "democratic republic" takes fresh steps towards naked bourgeois-military dictatorship and reaction. And step by step, behind

the scenes, moves are made for a shameful peace at the expense of the Spanish masses.

Yet in such historical moments, the movement is never one-way but two-way. Anglo-French intrigues, and, of a different order but also anti-revolutionary, Russian intrigue in Spain; militarization, bureaucratization, bourgeois dictatorship and reaction in Republican Spain, betrayals and defeats that strengthen Franco's and Mussolini's hands—these are what are developing on the surface, the upper current of Spanish life.

But down below there is the counter-current. Fresh masses of the U.G.T. and C.N.T. moving to the left, forcing the hesitant and confused Largo Caballero leftward, forcing the anarchist leaders leftward, moving faster than their leaderships, threatening to go beyond them, beginning to stream into the party of clear proletarian revolution, the P.O.U.M. The P.O.U.M. itself has won its spurs in the difficult May Days; it has clarified its program, met the test of fire and repression, comes out stronger, more respected, better able to fight.

The two-way development will continue for some time to come. It is a race between the government of defeat, compromise and reaction, and the party of proletarian revolution. Both are making gains, each after its fashion. The reaction gains in naked power; the revolution gains in mass clarity and support. There is no foreseeing how many stages this struggle will go through. There is no predicting the ultimate result. But

this much is clear, the Spanish masses will never tolerate in the long run either a divided Spain, or a fascist Spain, or a military dictatorship of the bourgeoisie resting on bayonets that fly the torn and treason-soiled flag of a bourgeois democracy that has no real roots in the Spanish social structure.

The struggle will be a long one. More than three quarters of a century ago Marx wrote of the Spanish people:

"Spain has never succeeded in acquiring the latest French style, so fashionable in 1848, of beginning and ending a revolution in the space of three days." Its civil wars have all of them been long and stubborn. The political struggles of the nineteenth century in Spain embrace cycles of three to nine years and even more, and they kept Spain in almost constant turmoil. The war for independence against Napoleon lasted from 1808 to 1814 (and Napoleon was mightier than Mussolini but the Spaniards won in the end). The struggle for a liberal monarchy followed, 1820-23, succeeded by a fresh outbreak in 1924 which lasted till 1843—a total cycle of twenty-three years of almost continuous civil war. The struggle over the first republic and Carlist wars lasted from 1868 to 1878. The present cycle of civil war, national revolutionary defense and proletarian revolution, will not prove an exception.

Already the Spanish proletariat has written bright and heroic, nay imperishable pages, in its struggle against capitalism, fascism and foreign

invasion. After the proletarian defeats in Germany and Austria, it has turned the tide of proletarian struggle, carried the international labor movement out of its low ebb of defeats and demoralization, set an example which stirs and awakens revolutionary forces everywhere. And in the fire of struggle itself, the Spanish proletariat is forging the party of proletarian revolution which will become ever more definitely its leader in its struggle for victory and power.

The duty of the labor movement of the rest of the world is clear: learn the lessons of the Spanish civil war; expose the traitorous policy of the People's Front and drive its advocates out of the proletarian camp; give all the help within our power to the Spanish proletariat in its struggle and to the Workers Party of Marxist Unification, better known by its Spanish initials as the P.O.U.M., the party that leads the revolution and will, with international solidarity and aid, yet lead the Spanish working class to victory!

The Thesis of Andres Nin

The following is a draft prepared by Andres Nin for the purpose of discussion and adoption by the P.O.U.M. at its second congress scheduled to take place this summer. It was published on April 5, 1937 in "Internal Discussion Bulletin" with a request for comment, amendment or proposals for a "counter-thesis"—which may sound strange to Communist Party members who have forgotten what a convention discussion should be like.

The preparations for the convention were interrupted by the suppression of the P.O.U.M., the arrest of all its leaders and most capable and devoted members, the framing-up of Andres Nin as "an agent of Franco" and his subsequent murder in jail without trial. The thesis, even without the corrections and improvements in detail which would doubtless have resulted from the pre-convention discussion, is one of the great documents of international Marxism. Few political papers, since the days when Lenin was at the head of the Communist International, have the revolutionary boldness, the insight, the luminous thought and vivid language that characterize this last important writing from the hands of Nin.

Let the reader compare it with the stale, sausage-machine theses of the ultra-left period and the fuzzy, unscrupulous and treacherous language of Comintern documents today, and he will understand why these preachers of confusion and outworn bourgeois catchwords, could not tolerate the existence of a clear revolutionary voice which reminded them of their own past and of the true meaning of the ideals and doctrines in the name of which they profess to speak. That is the reason why Nin lies dead, why his body, like those of

Liebkecht and Luxemburg under similar circumstances was secretly buried in the dead of night in some ditch or sewer on the outskirts of Madrid, why his great voice is stilled and his clear brain has ceased to function in the cause of the working class.

But such voices cannot be stilled: his thesis is being discussed in secret in the great cities and villages of Spain and among the troops that are holding their lines desperately against fascism, in the face of the sabotage of their own government. It continues to guide and inspire the P.O.U.M. which he led, and the Spanish working class which is rallying in increasing numbers to the revolutionary standard he held high.

Our readers should study this document, read it and reread it, for it is full of lessons to revolutionists, to conscious workers everywhere. It permits us to judge the shabby forgeries perpetrated against Nin, to judge between his party of proletarian revolution and the official Communist Party of Spain, agent and executioner for the counter-revolution; it throws a great light upon the problems of present day Spain, upon the People's Front, upon the Comintern. It calls aloud to us to give full support to the P.O.U.M. which is struggling for these things without Nin or Maurin to lead it any longer and with all the rest of its experienced leaders crowded in the jails of Republican Spain in danger of sharing his fate. We must enable the P.O.U.M., by our support, to reconstitute itself underground, to spread this thesis in hundreds of thousands and millions of copies so that the voice of Andres Nin, which they tried to still, may be heard by every worker thruout the Spanish land.

B.D.W.

* * *

The Nature of the Spanish Revolution

1. Developments in Spain since the Constituent Congress of the P.O.U.M., held in Barcelona on September 29, 1935, have confirmed the fundamental position of our party. We had affirmed that the struggle was not between bourgeois democracy and fascism but between

fascism and socialism, and we were absolutely correct in calling our revolution a democratic-socialist one.

The experiences of 1931-1935 amply demonstrated that the bourgeoisie was impotent to solve the fundamental problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and showed the necessity of the working class to place itself decidedly at the front of the movement for emancipation, for the realization of the democratic revolution and for the initiation of the socialist revolution. The persistence of democratic illusions and the organic alliance with the Republican parties were to lead inevitably to the strengthening of reactionary positions, and in the near future, to the triumph of fascism as the only way out of a capitalist regime incapable of solving its internal contradictions within the frame of bourgeois democratic institutions.

The lessons of Asturias, where the proletariat by decisively seizing leadership of the movement of October 1934, dealt a mortal blow against reaction, and the lesson of Catalonia, where during these same days we could once more see clearly the incapacity and inconsistency of the petty-bourgeois parties, were not taken advantage of sufficiently, due to the absence of a great revolutionary party. The socialist and communist parties, instead of taking advantage of the lesson of October by pushing forward the Workers Alliance which had produced such splendid results in Asturias, and instead of canalizing all the forces towards assuring the hegemony of the working class, once more shackled the proletariat, thru the People's Front, to the bourgeois Republican parties which had failed so miserably in October and which had virtually disappeared from the political scene.

The period immediately preceding the elections of February 16th is characterized by the bringing back to life of the Republican parties, thanks to the socialist and official communist parties, and also to a certain rebirth of democratic illusions among the masses, which seem to have been created more by the strong desire to secure the release of the political prisoners condemned for action in the October days than by confidence in the

Republican parties. This desire was so unanimous and the movement so all-powerful that our party was forced to join it, but it completely preserved its personality and independence and exercised strong and pitiless criticism of Republican politics. This tactic, which saved us from complete isolation, permitted us to approach closely to large masses who until that time were inaccessible to us, and among whom we were now able to spread our views.

The action of the left Republicans in power after February 16, was an absolute confirmation of our predictions. From the very first moment, a complete divorce took place between the government and the powerful impulse of the masses who forced the government to adopt the amnesty decree and initiated a vast and profound strike movement.

From below there was clamor for rapid and energetic action for a policy of revolutionary achievement and for rigorous measures against the reaction which each day was becoming more and more insolent.

From above was carried on a policy of passivity, of contemplation; a policy whose slogan seemed to be—change nothing, frighten no one, do not hurt the interests of the exploiting classes. The result of this policy was the fascist military rising of July 19, 1936. The roar of the cannon and the rattle of the machine guns awakened the proletariat, still clinging to democratic illusions, from its deep slumber. The electoral victory of February 16th had not touched the basic problems of our land. The fascist reaction applied more forceful arguments than the paper ballot. Taking advantage of the privileged position which the Republican government itself had extended to them by maintaining them in the most important strategic posts, the great majority of the officers of the army, in the service of reaction, unleashed civil war.

The Fascist Uprising and the Workers Revolution

2. The military-fascist rising provokes formidable reaction in the working class which throws itself resolutely into the combat and, despite passivity in some cases and

betrayal in others, despite the Republican parties whose official representatives refused to arm the workers, defeats the insurrection in the most important industrial centers of the country.

This determined intervention by the workers has great political consequences. The organs of bourgeois power are in reality destroyed. Everywhere revolutionary committees are created. The permanent army is overthrown and replaced by militiamen. The workers take possession of the factories. The peasants seize the lands. Churches and convents are destroyed by the purifying fire of revolution. In a few hours, or at most in a few days, the workers and peasants, thru direct revolutionary action, solve the problems which the Republican bourgeoisie has been unable to solve in five years—that is to say, the problems of the democratic revolution, and the working class initiates the socialist revolution by expropriating the bourgeoisie.

For some time, the organs of bourgeois power are nothing but a shadow. The real power is in the hands of the revolutionary committees which form a close network in every region of the land not in the hands of the fascists.

Nevertheless, in this first period, revolutionary impulse is much more vigorous in Catalonia than in the rest of Spain. There is no doubt but that Catalonia marches at the head of the revolution thanks to the influence of the P.O.U.M., the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., which did not form part of the People's Front and where therefore democratic-Republican opportunism penetrated less deeply into the ranks of the working masses.

The fascist-military insurrection then, destined principally to strangle the revolutionary working-class movement, accelerates it at a dizzying speed and clearly places the question of power: either fascism or socialism. What was planned as a counter-revolution turns into a proletarian revolution with all of its distinguishing characteristics: weakening of the bourgeois state machinery, decomposition of the army, of the forces of compulsion of the state, of the judicial institutions, arming of the

working class which attacks and weakens the right of private property, direct intervention by peasants who are expropriating the landowners, and finally the conviction on the part of the exploiting classes that their rule has ended.

During the early weeks that followed July 19th, the conviction that the past cannot return, that the democratic republic has been outlived, is general. And the revolution is so powerful that the petty-bourgeois parties themselves proclaim the demise of the capitalist regime and the necessity of undertaking the socialist transformation of Spanish society.

The only immediate way out of the situation was to coordinate the push of the masses and to institute a strong government based upon the organizations born in the fire of revolution as a direct expression of the will of those who were playing a predominant role in the struggle against fascism. Such a strong government could only have been a Workers and Peasants Government. This position maintained by the P.O.U.M. since the very moment when the character of the struggle became clear, came up against the opposition of all the parties in the People's Front, and in first place, against that of the Communist Party, and the indecision of the C.N.T. whose anarchist ideology prevented it from realizing the fundamental and decisive importance of the problem of power.

In the meantime, with the aid of a tenacious and systematic campaign of propaganda, two views of tragic consequence for working class victory, were developed. The first of these views was expressed in the term: "First win the war, then make the revolution." According to the second view, which is a direct consequence of the first, in the present civil war, the workers and peasants are fighting for the maintenance of the parliamentary democratic republic and therefore one cannot speak of the proletarian revolution. Later, this conception acquired an unexpected corollary—namely, that this democratic struggle which bleeds and ruins the

country is a war for national independence and for the defense of the fatherland.

Our party adopted, from the very first moment, an attitude of decided opposition to these counter-revolutionary concepts.

War and Revolution Are Inseparable

3. The formula: "First win the war, then make the revolution" is fundamentally false. In the struggle now going on in Spain, war and revolution are not only two inseparable terms, but synonymous. The civil war, a state of more or less prolonged, violent conflict between two or more classes of society, is one of the manifestations—the sharpest—of the struggle between the proletariat on the one hand and the big bourgeoisie and landowners on the other, who, frightened by the revolutionary advance of the proletariat, attempt to establish a bloody dictatorship which would consolidate their class privileges. The struggle on the field of battle is only a prolongation of the struggle in the rear. War is a form of politics. It is politics which directs the war in any case. Armies always defend the interests of a given class. It is a question as to whether the workers and peasants on the battle-field are fighting for the bourgeois order or for a socialist society. War and revolution are inseparable at the present moment in Spain as they were in France in the 18th century and in Russia in 1917-1920. How can we separate the war from the revolution when the war is only the violent culmination of the revolutionary process which has been developing in our country from 1930 up to the present moment?

In reality, the formula: "First win the war" hides the purpose of frustrating the revolution. Revolutions must be made when favorable circumstances exist and history does not offer them to order. If no advantage is taken of moments of greatest revolutionary tension, the enemy class reconquers lost positions and ends by strangling the revolution. The history of the 19th century and the more recent post-war period (Germany,

Austria, Italy, China, etc.) presents us with abundant proofs of this. To postpone the revolution until after the war has been won means to give free reign to the bourgeoisie who, taking advantage of the diminishing revolutionary tension, reestablishes its machinery of repression in preparation for the systematic restoration of the capitalist regime.

War, as we have already said, is a form of politics. The political regime always serves a definite class of which it is the expression and the instrument. While the war is on, some kind of politics must be followed: In the service of whom? In the interest of what class? The whole question lies here. And the guarantee of a rapid and certain victory at the front lies in a firm revolutionary policy in the rear—capable of inspiring the fighters with the fire and confidence indispensable for the struggle; of arousing the revolutionary solidarity of the international proletariat, the only solidarity upon which we can count; to create a solid war industry, to rebuild, on a socialist basis, the economy broken down by civil war; to forge an efficient army in the service of the cause of the proletariat, which is the cause of civilized humanity. The instrument of such revolutionary politics can be only a Workers and Peasants Government.

The Reformist Menace in Spain

4. As in Russia in 1917 and in all of Europe after the imperialist war, the greatest obstacle to the victorious advance of the proletarian revolution is reformism, agent of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the workers. But here in our own country, we have the paradoxical case that the most characteristic exponent of castrating reformism is precisely the Communist Party of Spain and its affiliate the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia (P.S.U.C.), member of an international, the Communist International, which was born as a consequence of an ideologic and organic break with reformism. Prisoner of the Soviet bureaucracy which has turned its back upon the international proletarian revolution, it has pinned its

hopes upon the "democratic" countries and the League of Nations; official communism has definitely abandoned revolutionary class politics and has turned towards the alliance with bourgeois-democratic parties (Popular Front) and is psychologically preparing the masses for the next war. From this comes the watchword: "Fight for the parliamentary democratic republic", complemented by: "Fight for national independence" which, translated into international politics, signifies: subjection of the revolution in Spain to the interests of the imperialist Anglo-French block, of which the Soviet Union is itself a part. The fatal consequences of such policy have not been long in making themselves felt: Reformism, speculating on the difficulties of the war and the possibilities of international complications and aided effectively by the representatives of the Stalinist bureaucracy, who, in turn, have speculated on the help lent by the U.S.S.R., has succeeded in undermining systematically the revolutionary conquests, and is preparing the ground for the counter-revolution. Our elimination from the government of the Generalidad, the attempts to form a "neutral, democratic" Popular Army, the suppression of the militias in the rear and the reconstitution of public order on the basis of reestablishing the old machinery and press censorship, are the most important steps of this counter-revolutionary process, which will continue inexorably until the revolutionary movement is completely crushed if the Spanish working class does not react rapidly and vigorously, reconquering positions won in the July days and pushing the socialist revolution forward.

In the present situation, unmistakably revolutionary, the watchword—"Fight for the parliamentary democratic Republic" can only serve the interests of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. Today more than ever, "the word *democracy* is nothing more than a cover with which they wish to prevent the revolutionary people from rising and undertaking freely and fearlessly, on its own account, the building of a new society." (Lenin). As revolutionary Marxism has taught us, the democratic republic is only a masked form of the bourgeois dictator-

ship. In the period of the height of capitalism, when the latter still represented a progressive factor, the bourgeoisie could permit itself the luxury of conceding to the working class a series of "democratic" liberties—considerably restricted to be sure, and limited by the fact of bourgeois economic and political domination. Today, in the epoch of imperialism, the "final stage of capitalism," the bourgeoisie, in order to overcome its internal contradictions, finds it necessary to resort to the setting up of brutal dictatorships (fascism) which destroy even these miserable democratic liberties. Under these circumstances, the world finds itself facing a fatal dilemma: socialism or fascism. The "democratic" regimes are of necessity fleeting, inconsistent and, to make matters worse, the lulling and disarming of the workers with "democratic" illusions effectively prepares the ground for fascist reaction.

The Stalinists, in order to justify their monstrous betrayal of revolutionary Marxism, argue that the democratic republic they have in mind will be a democratic republic different from the others. It will be a "popular" republic from which will have disappeared the material base of fascism. That is to say, they scandalously toss aside the Marxist theory of the state as an instrument of domination of one class and fall into the utopia of the democratic state "above classes", in the service of the people—with the object of mystifying the masses and preparing the consolidation, pure and simple, of the bourgeois regime. A republic from which the material basis of fascism has disappeared can only be a socialist republic, since the material basis for fascism is capitalism.

The Attitude of the Working Class Tendencies

5. "Anti-fascism" in the abstract—shrewdly managed by the reformists who are preparing politically and psychologically for intervention in the next imperialist world war, presented as a struggle between the fascist and democratic countries—is the antidote to the proletarian revo-

lution, the expression of the policy of "national unity" against which Marxism has always placed the class struggle.

If the dilemma before which history has placed the Spanish proletariat is "fascism or socialism", the fundamental problem of the hour is the problem of power. All the others—the question of military organization, of war industry, of supplies, of economic reconstruction, of internal safety, etc., are subordinate to this fundamental problem whose solution depends upon the class in whose hands power lies.

What is the attitude of the different sectors of the working class movement toward this problem?

The Communist Party, the Spanish Socialist Party and the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia advocate the policy of the People's Front, which presupposes the exercise of power by the "anti-fascist" governments, of coalition with the bourgeoisie and with a bourgeois-democratic program.

The C.N.T. and the F.A.I. resolutely declare themselves partisans of the socialist revolution and therefore bitter enemies of the restoration of the democratic republic; but their anti-state tradition and systematic propaganda in favor of libertarian communism, carried on during many years, makes difficult their evolution towards the concept of proletarian power.

Our attitude towards these different sectors is determined by the role they play or can play in the course of the development of actual events.

The Communist Party of Spain and the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia, by their present political position, directly inspired by the Communist International—instrument, in turn, of Soviet bureaucracy—must be considered as ultra-opportunist and ultra-reformist organizations. For their policy of class-collaboration, for their complete renunciation of the fundamental principles and tactics of revolutionary Marxism, for their declared and active aid in the plans for strangling the Spanish revolution, plotted by national and international capitalism, the C.P. and the P.S.U.C. play the role of agents of

the bourgeoisie in the working class movement; they are more dangerous for the revolution than the bourgeoisie itself, since the Marxist label with which they adorn themselves facilitates their penetration into the ranks of the proletariat. The supreme interests of the revolution demand constant and implacable criticism of the political positions of these parties, criticism which will contribute effectively in accentuating the differentiation within them, thereby drawing the proletarian elements towards a revolutionary position.

The actual events have clearly shown the ideologic inconsistency of the so-called "left" of the Spanish Socialist Party, whose revolutionary phraseology had given birth to so many hopes among a goodly number of the vanguard of the working class. Virtually nothing remains of the "left" tendencies which existed on the eve of July 19th.

There is no fundamental difference between the tendencies of the "right," "left" or "center"; all of them are dominated by a common denominator—the policy of the People's Front—which leads them to renounce the revolutionary positions of the proletariat and to play the game of the democratic bourgeoisie. But at the base of the party it is easy to discern profound uneasiness, produced principally by the attempts of Stalinism to absorb the party—as it has already absorbed the youth—and to subject it to the policy of the Third International. Many of the old militants look with grief and with a dumb feeling of despair and protest upon this work of destruction, systematically carried out against the organization which they built with so much effort, and upon the introduction of methods which are repugnant to their socialist conscience and the traditions of their party. On the other hand, the scandalously opportunist policy of the C. P., characterized by a monstrous deforming of Marxism, arouses a lively and justified fear among the thousands of workers sincerely revolutionary who have joined the Spanish Socialist Party and who realize with alarm the penetration of the Stalinists into their ranks.

The mission of our party should be to help those ele-

ments to see the situation clearly, trying to guide them along the correct path in a friendly way, that is to say, to make them understand the necessity of a clear policy of proletarian intransigence served by a strong revolutionary party. Temporary agreements are desirable with those elements who, without fully accepting our revolutionary positions, are ready to fight against the Stalinist bureaucracy and its method of corruption.

The C.N.T. and the F.A.I. have agreed with us from the very first moment, in recognizing that the war and the revolution are inseparable; they have also agreed with us in the estimate of some fundamental problems—such as the question of the army, public order, etc. But the vacillations of these organizations on the question of power, and their strictly syndicalist position which tends to eliminate parties (which does not hinder their establishing actual collaboration with socialists and official communists thru the U.G.T.)—these things have tended to prevent our agreement from having the fruitful results that we have desired.

Anarcho-syndicalism has notably corrected its previous positions, but the weight of tradition has prevented it from carrying these corrections to their logical consequences. Thus, for example, it has renounced its inveterate apoliticalism by entering the government of the republic of Catalonia—that is to say, entering the government of collaboration with bourgeois Republican parties—without daring to adopt an affirmative attitude towards the question of the formation of a Workers and Peasants Government, which would be more easily understandable to the workers of the C.N.T. If the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. would adopt this attitude, the victorious destiny of our revolution would be guaranteed. Only the conquest of power would permit the rapid and effective solution of all the problems which the war and the revolution have posed.

Without giving up tenacious and patient work towards leading the masses of the C.N.T. to this position, so urgently demanded by the actual situation, we should orientate all our force towards bringing about closer re-

lations between our party and the organizations of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., our natural allies under the present circumstances. The very important agreements already manifested and the necessity of defending the revolution in danger, demand an effective alliance which does not presuppose by any means the giving up of mutual criticism nor the renunciation of the defense of our respective positions.

The Conquest of Power and the Workers and Peasants Government

6. The imperious duty of the moment then is the conquest of power by the proletariat in alliance with the peasants and the formation of a Workers and Peasants Government, the only government capable of organizing the broken-down economy and establishing a revolutionary order in the country in accordance with the needs of the people and the war.

This government, in order that it may have effective revolutionary power, cannot be chosen from above as a result of combinations more or less diplomatic, nor can it arise from a parliament constituted thru the customary bourgeois-democratic norms. A government formed by delegates from workers organizations chosen by the higher committees of the same, will undoubtedly represent a forward step with respect to the present situation, but it will not be the kind of government that the circumstances demand. Elected under such conditions, it would certainly not go much further than the position of the People's Front.

The Workers and Peasants Government must be the direct expression of the revolutionary will of the worker and peasant masses of the country and, for that very reason, it cannot rise from the Parliament of February 16, completely outlived by events, nor can it come from elections based on universal suffrage. The bourgeois parliament must be dissolved and in its place must be called a congress which will lay down the economic, social and political bases of a Spain freed from capitalist domination, which is being forged on the fields of battle and

which will choose a Workers and Peasants Government. Such an assembly cannot be of the bourgeois-democratic type, that is to say, it cannot be based on the right of representation of all classes, but it must reflect the new situation created by the civil war and the revolution, conceding all rights to those who are supporting the revolution with arms in their hands or with productive labor. In a word, the congress must be formed by delegates from the trade unions, from the peasants and from the soldiers.

Those same organs should constitute the basis for the transformation of the whole machinery of power, beginning with the municipalities, with the modifications in detail which circumstances demand. The orientation which the P.O.U.M. advances can be summarized in these two fundamental slogans:

1. Conquest of power by the working class.
2. Institution of a socialist regime.

In the present period of the revolution, the conquest of power by the proletariat does not necessarily imply armed insurrection. The positions which the working class still holds in spite of the retrogression suffered by the revolution; the specific gravity of the proletariat and its organizations, and above all the fact that it continues to hold a great part of the arms in its hands permit the peaceful conquest of power. To accomplish this, all that is needed is that the proletariat regain confidence in its own force and decide resolutely to impose its will. It depends entirely on this whether the correlation of forces of July 19th will be reestablished and whether the working class will know how to utilize that relation of forces for its own benefit, or what amounts to the same thing, for the benefit of the revolution.

The conquest of power by the proletariat signifies the absolute hegemony of the working class for the purpose of implacably crushing every attempt at counter-revolution, and of suppressing the bourgeoisie. This hegemony of the working class *can under no circumstances identify itself with the dictatorship of one party,*

but presupposes the widest working class democracy, the most absolute right of criticism for every section of the proletariat, participation of everyone in the common task. Only the exploiting classes will be deprived of all political rights. When classes have completely disappeared, organs of compulsion will become superfluous and the state will disappear.

On conquering power, the working class will not limit itself to utilizing the old state machinery—as the democratic bourgeoisie did—but will destroy it to its very roots. With the help of committees of workers, peasants and soldiers, it will transform from top to bottom the whole governmental machine and will institute a *cheap government* and one that is truly democratic. A cheap government will be possible through the destruction of the old and expensive bureaucratic system, the elimination of high salaries, establishing the principle that no one can receive a higher wage than a skilled worker, and thru the vigilant and active control of the working class.

True democracy will be guaranteed by the effective participation of the immense majority of the country in the administration of public affairs, the filling of all posts by election, and the recall of their incumbents at any time. Finally, the Workers and Peasants Government will be the government of military victory, for only a government of such a character is capable of creating the indispensable morale for victory; only a government of such character can organize a solid war industry, nationalize banks, eliminate speculation, concentrate and mobilize all the economic resources of the country for the war.

The Working Class and the Petty Bourgeoisie

7. One of the arguments to which the reformists resort most frequently to justify their collaborationist and counter-revolutionary politics is the necessity of maintaining the block with the parties of the petty bourgeoisie so as to assure the support of an important section of the population.

The petty bourgeoisie constitutes, in effect, a factor of major importance in every country, and particularly in those countries in which, like our own, it has become a part of the capitalist system only after long delay. But because of its intermediate character, standing midway between the big bourgeoisie and the working class because of its economic dependence, it cannot play an independent role in political life. Vacillating and undecided, it always moves between the two basic classes—carrying out the policies now of one and now of the other.

The parties of the petty bourgeoisie maintain the fiction of independent politics—politics which is neither bourgeois nor proletarian—but in reality they are always an instrument in the hands of big capital and for that reason an instrument against the interests of the petty bourgeoisie itself whose representative they pretend to be. Their politics leads straight to the consolidation of the economic positions of big capital and therefore to the complete stifling of the petty bourgeoisie. The alliance with the petty bourgeois parties does not represent an alliance *with the petty bourgeoisie* but an alliance *against* it. The Spanish experience from April 14th to the present moment presents eloquent testimony to this fact. The petty bourgeoisie and, in first place, the peasants, have not seen satisfied a single one of their fundamental demands. Whatever they have secured, they owe to the independent action of the working class.

The petty bourgeoisie, potentially, is neither revolutionary nor reactionary. They want order—any kind of order—but order. And such order only the bourgeoisie or the proletariat can establish. When the working class acts decisively and gives the feeling that it knows what it wants and where it is going, the petty bourgeoisie is neutralized, and a large section will follow the proletariat, or more correctly, will be dragged along by it. But if the working class fails at the decisive moment, the petty bourgeoisie loses faith in it, turns its back upon it and once more fastens its eyes on the big bourgeoisie.

If at such a moment, there were to come along a more or less demagogic leader, it would not be difficult for him to take advantage of the disenchantment of the petty bourgeois masses and convert them into a social base for a movement destined to crush the working class and institute a regime of bloody dictatorship of big capital (fascism).

The petty bourgeoisie has gone thru the experience of the democratic republic. To repeat that experience means to prepare new defeats and to create the necessary premises for the incorporation of the petty bourgeois masses in the camp of reaction. On the other hand, if the working class should appear in the eyes of the popular masses as the true leader of the revolution, as the only force capable of setting up a strong regime—a new order—the petty bourgeoisie would follow it just as they followed it after the glorious July days.

The politics of attracting the petty bourgeois does not, then, consist of holding back the rhythm of the revolution but in speeding it up. The more decided and audacious the proletariat shows itself to be, the more certain it can be of the collaboration of the petty bourgeoisie, or at least of neutralizing it.

Fundamental Tasks of the Working Class

8. The division of the working class is undoubtedly one of the greatest obstacles to winning the confidence of the petty bourgeois masses in the invincible force of the proletariat. Trade union unity (the absence of which has unfavorable repercussions upon the socialist organization of production) would constitute a great step forward, but the reformist bureaucracy systematically sabotages such unity for it senses that a unified trade union movement would soon slip from its hands and would pass into the ranks of the revolutionary elements. To push forward and to impose this unity is the bounden duty of the working class.

On the political field, organs of unity should be built to meet these circumstances. At the end of 1933, the

Workers Alliances appeared destined to play in our country, the role that the soviets played in the Russian revolution. These Alliances showed their magnificent revolutionary efficacy during the Asturias insurrection in October 1934. Formed by all the parties and by all workers organizations without exception, the Workers Alliance of Asturias showed the world conclusively what prodigious heroism and initiative a united proletariat is capable of. But the policy of the People's Front frustrated those splendid beginnings and once more the working class marches at the tail of the Republican parties. If the Workers Alliances had not been liquidated by the champions of class collaboration, events would have taken a completely different turn and the proletariat would undoubtedly have seized the hegemony.

To revive the Workers Alliances today would be a mistake because they belong to a stage already left behind. Congresses of delegates from the trade unions, peasants and soldiers, would represent substantially the same thing today as the Workers Alliances did in the previous stage. Upon these congresses should be based the government of the working class; from them must arise the organs of power; they must incarnate the unity of action of the workers above the differences which separate them on the trade union and political fields. Upon them will be based the future Iberian Union of Socialist Republics.

Neither trade union unity nor these assemblies of workers, peasants and soldiers delegates, exclude the possibility of the formation of alliances among the different sectors of the working class movement which may agree on the conception of the moment and the attitude of the working class. On the contrary, such alliances are clearly indicated by the present situation.

In the concrete case of our revolution, necessity dictates the formation of a Revolutionary Workers Front formed by the C.N.T., F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M., organizations which agree on the necessity of blocking the advance of reformism and the return to the conditions which

existed prior to July 19th and who agree on pushing forward the proletarian revolution to its end. A program of clear and concrete aims—aims perfectly realizable today—should be the basis of the Revolutionary Worker Front—whose formation will indisputably determine a fundamental change in the correlation of forces and will give a powerful impulse to the revolution.

Intervention and International Solidarity

9. One of the favorite arguments used by the reformists against the proletarian revolution is that the revolution will inevitably be crushed by the capitalist countries.

The working class would commit a profound blunder if it did not count upon the probability of foreign armed intervention against the Spanish revolution. But if the proletariat were not able to launch upon decisive revolutionary struggle except it were certain that no such intervention would take place, it would have to renounce before-hand every hope of emancipation. For it is evident that international capitalism will not be able to look on passively at the victory of the proletariat in any country of the world.

The danger of intervention exists and, if the decisive factor were superior military technique, the defeat of the proletariat could be considered certain. But there is a moral factor infinitely more efficacious, the expansive force of the revolution. Triumphant in Spain, it would have immediate repercussions in the other countries, particularly in Italy, and Germany, to whose regions it would deal a mortal blow.

The Russian revolution was the immediate cause of the collapse of the Central Powers; it made the capitalist regime tremble in all Europe and provoked a movement of international proletarian solidarity so intense that it contributed powerfully to the failure of intervention. The consequences of the Spanish revolution can be no less transcendental. The victory of the working class of our

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